Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1992 ISSUE #39
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COVER: Sometimes the play doesn't follow the script. Paul Jaquays's cover painting shows the audience's view of murder and mayhem at the theater known as "Legerdemain."

The Further Adventures of . . .

What's the best way to get PCs from one DUNGEON® Adventure to the next? One way, as some readers have suggested, is to print serialized adventures. However, we don't want to make anyone wait two or more issues to play an adventure.

One of my favorite parts of any DUNGEON module is the section on further adventures, where the author gives DMs suggestions for continuing the action. In this issue, "Legerdemain" and "Last of the Iron House" provide ideas for future adventures. Last issue we had "A Blight on the Land" and "Things That Go Bump in the Night" begging for future adventures, as did "The White Boar of Kilfay" and "A Wizard's Fate" in issue #37. I'd like to see some of these ideas developed into full-fledged adventures. Sequels like these allow for the continuity that makes a campaign great, without weakening an adventure by making it dependent on past or future issues. Anyone (not necessarily the original author) can submit a proposal for a sequel adventure. Be sure you have a copy of our writer's guidelines before you send us your ideas, however.

We are most definitely not looking for more-of-the-same, but rather related adventures that can be read and played independent of their sources. We don't want more yuan-ti temples to follow up "Serpents of the Sands" or more tombs just like "The Mud Sorceror's Tomb." "Into the Fire" and "Out of the Ashes" in issues #1 and #17 are a good example of what can be done with sequels.

The other way to create a continuing campaign is to link together two or more DUNGEON adventures with some of the hooks that authors provide in the adventures themselves. Jonathan Rariden provided us with a great example of this in his letter in issue #34, linking five adventures! I'd like to see more descriptions of how you've strung adventures together. We'll print a few of the best in a future issue, and the person who submits the best campaign made up of DUNGEON adventures will win the adulation of thousands (sorry, we blew the promotions budget on the survey bribes). Hope to hear from you soon.

Wolfgang Baur

Vol. VII, No. 3

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And he'll say, as he scratches himself with his claws, 'Well, the Theatre's certainly not what it was.'

T. S. Eliot, "Gus: The Theatre Cat"

BELOW VULTURE POINT

BY JEFF FAIRBOURN

Bombers sighted, twelve o'clock high!

Artwork by Jeff Fairbourn

Jeff writes: "Because my life's responsibility has increased geometrically, I don't have much time to write for DUNGEON® Adventures anymore. I do find myself relying more and more on this magazine to provide well-written adventures for my own campaign, and I'm not disappointed."

"Below Vulture Point" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 6-9 player characters of zero to 1st level (about five total levels; zero-level PCs count as half a level). It takes place in the High Dale in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting, although it can easily be placed in any AD&D campaign as a beginning scenario. This adventure is designed to prepare zero-level PCs for the character classes that will most suit them when they reach 1st level. The plot centers on the urd, a monster detailed in the *Monstrous Compendium*, Volume Two.

If zero-level PCs participate, the players and Dungeon Master must decide which version of the guidelines for zero-level play they wish to use. This module can be played with the version in *GREYHAWK® Adventures* (pages 117-126), the version in modules N4 *Treasure Hunt* and N5 *Under Illefarn*, or any other compatible guidelines.

The version in modules N4 and N5 is simple. Zero-level PCs begin at −500 XP. While the PCs' attributes are determined normally, they have no special abilities or magical skills. Each has 1-6 hp and one weapon proficiency.

For this module, a PC should have at least 4 hp and should also choose two nonweapon proficiencies (both from the general category). While the zero-level PC adventures, the DM should note the PC's inclinations toward any class or alignment (which may dictate a particular class). When the PC reaches 0 XP, the player and the DM should decide on a particular character class based on the PC's zero-level pursuits.

The guidelines given in *GREYHAWK Adventures* are much more involved. All standard attributes for a zero-level character have a starting value of 3, and the PC has 3 hp. These point values can be raised through the acquisition and distribution of experience. If using this version, the DM should run this adventure after his PCs have played a few game weeks and have raised their ability scores, hit points, and other skills.

NPCs who can serve as mentors, tutors, and instructors for the fledgling PCs are provided in this adventure, if the DM needs them.

First-level PCs are committed to one character class and are rapidly progressing in that field. The DM should decide if the 1st-level and zero-level PCs have some prior relationship to each other in the campaign. First-level PCs may use the same means of instruction and employment as the zero-level PCs.

The High Dale's environment is reasonably safe for low-level PCs, consisting of terraced farmlands and a few villages. Many a veteran adventurer has retired to live out his final years peaceably in the High Dale. These veterans are often found running inns, taverns, and markets where they can tell their stories (with some exaggeration) and hear all the rumors and gossip that pass through. The people are friendly, and for the most part life in the High Dale is trouble free. It is a nice, quiet place to grow up, to learn the value of hard work, and to retire.

The High Dale's standing militia consists of only 50 men, each armed with a sword and spear. The area is also protected by the Pegasus Archery Company, a group of 75 mounted mercenaries. If the DM wishes, he could draft the PCs into the Dale's militia. If the PCs are only passersby, they would not be duty-bound to participate, although the folk of the High Dale do not trust wanderers and freebooters. Because the folk of the High Dale are mainly of good alignment, any neutral or evil PCs will be quietly and subtly ostracized.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

When Dorug the urd was separated from the rest of his family, he feared he would perish. The powerful wind that blew the little creature away from his gen's territory in the Thunder Peaks was a fluke, but Dorug was disoriented and exhausted when he finally landed in the shelter of some rocky hills.

After sleeping a few hours, Dorug awoke to find the winds had subsided. He went to explore the lands around him. Although he didn't know it, the wind had blown Dorug south of the Thunder Peaks, into the hills near Hooknose Crag. Dorug was drawn to a large, oddly shaped rock surrounded by flying shapes—a place the folk of the High Dale call Vulture Point because of the large population of vultures (both normal and giant varieties) that lived in its vicinity, and because of the shape of the rock itself. The great stone monument looked like a massive vulture's head with its beaked maw open and screeching at the sky. Many vultures built their nests in the shade of the "mouth."

Dorug's arrival at Vulture Point marked a turning point in the lives of the rock's denizens. A tribe of kobolds had taken up residence there many years ago, living in caves beneath the "head." Due to the proximity of their home to the lands of men, their numbers had constantly diminished. When Dorug arrived, the tribe was near extinction. The urd was accepted as the kobolds' superior, and he took control of the survivors. He ordered them to steal several giant-vulture hatchlings, but instead of eating them as the kobolds had done, he cared for them and trained them. Dorug's tribe had a way with vultures.

As time went on, some of the kobolds resented Dorug's attention to the giant birds. A few of them confronted Dorug about his attempts to train the vultures, calling it futile and misguided. Dorug took these few outside to prove the worth of his works.

Below Vulture Point, a rough road runs from the High Dale to the Wyvernwater in Cormyr. The rebellious kobolds were forced to walk on this road under the gaze of the young-adult vultures. Dorug whistled the large birds to the attack, and they took to the air. Each vulture carried a large, pointed stone in its claws, and the birds plummeted straight toward the kobolds on the trail. The kobolds tried to flee but were overtaken and pelted to death by the birds' stones.

Dorug watched with satisfaction as the rest of the birds of Vulture Point joined their trained fellows in devouring the corpses of the dissident kobolds. Needless to say, the remaining kobolds' faith in Dorug and his strategy grew after that. The group began waylaying lone travelers on the rough road, and soon the kobold tribe prospered.

Dorug's crew has not attracted the attention of any professional adventurers because none have been in the area for some time, and because the kobold-vulture gang has not done any real damage to society.

Adventure Background

A few years ago, an aging half-elf adventurer named Randamis Ambleer retired to the High Dale to live off of his moderate acquisitions. He hired builders to construct a modest manor and moved in with his hired servants. He has been received fairly well among the folk of the High Dale, and he throws an annual feast for his neighbors on the anniversary of his arrival. He owns a large pasture where he keeps many fine horses as a hobby.

Randamis was actually forced to retire due to a chronic stomach ailment. The infirmity may be hereditary, or it may be the result of an adventuring mishap. When his neighbors and servants suggest he get clerical aid, he only smiles, shakes his head, and says he has tried that many times, but the ailment always comes back. The half-elf says it is time to let the illness run its course. However, Randamis has been able to nullify the pain caused by the infirmity by drinking an exotic herbal tea. The tea's ingredients can be acquired in the markets of eastern Cormyr, and the half-elf regularly sends agents to buy a sufficient supply of it while gather up other supplies he requires.

Randamis had quite a "shopping list," and sent his latest group of agents on a longer course that took them through Archendale, Sembia, Suzail in Cormyr, and the Hullack Forest. He expects them back soon and is anxious for their return, for his supply of herbal tea is quite low.

Unfortunately, the agents ran into trouble. After passing the Wyvernwater, they traveled along the Old Road that led around Hooknose Crag and into the High Dale. There, they passed below Vulture Point and were ambushed by Dorug and his nest of dive-bombing vultures. All of the riders but one were killed.

The pack horses were scattered but were later rounded up by the kobolds, and soon no trace of the ambush remained. Marlbee, the sole rider to escape, was badly wounded by the vultures' stones before he could get out of range. Deranged from his fear, pain, and loss of blood, Marlbee clung to his mount and sped south into the High Dale toward Ambleer Manor. Feeling his last strength ebbing, Marlbee turned to seek aid at the nearest building, the Dusty Road Inn.

For the Player Characters

The Dusty Road Inn is as popular a stopping place for travelers as any in the High Dale, and is the favorite establishment of members of the local militia. Often a few tale-telling folk stop in, those who have led colorful, adventurous lives and have lived to tell about it. The inn is a good place for people like the PCs, for there are interesting people to meet and fascinating things to learn.

The innkeeper is Sammson Silverload, a dwarf who quit adventuring after a bout with a giant netted him a nice amount of silver but almost did him in. He used the treasure to build the Dusty Road Inn and retire. He often tells the tale of the giant-killing, a popular request from his customers. He is friendly and open, especially to younger, daring folk like the PCs.

Sammson is a member of the militia of High Dale, and a close friend to Randamis. With his keen eye for mischief-makers, he serves as the neighborhood's watchdog against unwanted transients, subtly goading them into passing on if he thinks they are trouble.

Sammson Silverload: AL LG; AC 9 (6); MV 5 (4); F5/T5; hp 34; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 15, C 15, I 13, W 14, Ch 8; ML 14; studded leather armor (not worn at the Inn), *short sword +3,* potions of *healing* and *levitation,* light crossbow.

Sammson is short even for a dwarf, standing only 3'6" tall. His hair and beard are a dark, bristly gray, and he tucks them into his shirt while he takes care of business at the inn. He is very proud of the Dusty Road Inn and works hard to keep it a respectable establishment. He keeps his weapons hidden in a gunny sack in a small kitchen closet.

It is assumed that the PCs are either folk of the High Dale or are welcome travelers. To begin this adventure, the DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The Dusty Road Inn is a nice place for friends to meet, talk, and relax after a day of hard work. You have taken a liking to the place and its friendly atmosphere. It seems to be a safe place to share your goals and dreams with each other. You think back on the glorious tales you have heard of riches, honor, fame, and brave deeds. The stories are inspiring, yet the actions they speak of all seem hopelessly beyond you. Some of you wish to become more than just hired servants. Some of you wish to establish a name, learn magic, or take up the worship of one of the local gods. Yet you know the road that will take you there is long and arduous, and the first steps will be the hardest.
>
> On this night, however, the road may be closer than it seems. You are almost alone in the common room of the inn. Sammson, the innkeeper, is wiping a tabletop to a clean finish and admiring his work, and Murthus the drunk is sitting sprawled over his table, empty mug in hand.
>
> Through the open front door you hear a horse approaching. The gallop slows to a trot, then to a walk, and finally stops outside the inn. Your eyes are drawn to the entrance as you wait to see who will enter. After a moment, you hear scuffling footsteps and see a dark figure in the doorway. The man stumbles into the room, one hand on his forehead, the other clutching for the edge of the nearest tabletop. He starts to speak but grows faint and collapses, tipping the table and crashing to the floor. You can see blood on the man's head.

Sammson immediately goes to the man's aid, using his apron to stop the flow of blood from the man's head. If the PCs try to help, Sammson directs them to fetch some water and ale from the kitchen, and some rags from the pantry. As they care for the man's wounds, the man wakes up, grips the arm of a PC, and says, "Randamis . . . I must . . ." and then faints.

Sammson recognizes both the man and the name he coughs up. After he wraps the man's head in cloth, he pulls from his apron a silver piece for each PC and hands over the coins, saying:

> "Take these—I know you can use 'em—and Murthus' pony from out front, and take this man to Ambleer Manor. He is a servant of Randamis Ambleer, and I think the ol' codger can help him. Quick, off with ye!"

He helps the PCs carry the man outside and seats him on Murthus' pony. He gives the PCs directions toward Randamis's home and tells them to hurry. If the PCs heal Marlbee with a *cure light wounds* or similar spell, he awakens long enough to thank the PCs and beseech them to take him to Randamis. Although the spell heals his cuts and bruises, Marlbee is still exhausted from a long, taxing ride, and he sleeps in the saddle until they arrive at Ambleer Manor.

If the PCs refuse to help, Sammson adopts a stern tone, ordering them to get off their backsides and give him a hand. If they still refuse, he orders them out of his inn and tells them never to return. Then he rouses Murthus from his stupor and presses him into taking the rider to Randamis.

Murthus: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (none while intoxicated); Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; dagger.

The PCs may be familiar with Randamis's reputation if they have been in the High Dale for very long (DM's discretion). Many of the old-timers know a local tale about Randamis, though Sammson tells it best:

Soon after Randamis arrived in the High Dale, before the Dalefolk accepted him, an ankheg attacked several farmers not far from the Dusty Road Inn. Ambleer Manor was unfinished, and Randamis was staying at the inn until he could move into his home. When he heard about the ankheg, he gathered his adventuring gear and went to the site where the farmers were attacked. There, he descended into the creature's burrows alone, tracked it down, and killed it. Randamis has been well accepted since then. In fact, the tale grows with the telling, as often happens, and Randamis is almost the village hero.

The trip to Ambleer Manor takes one-half hour from the inn by foot, and Sammson's directions are easy to follow. Evening is coming on, and the Dalefolk are settling down for the night, so the PCs do not encounter anyone on the road to the half-elf's home. The wounded rider's condition does not change during the journey.

Ambleer Manor

The yardlamps of Ambleer Manor are kept alight throughout the night and are easy to see from a distance. Randamis keeps them lit so that the manor stands out in the Dale, making it easier for his agents to find his home. The manor has a low stone wall and a small

green lawn broken by paths of stepping stones. A human guard watches the front gate of the wall. During the day, the guard will allow any unarmed person into the manor grounds. During the night, his instructions are to turn all away unless they are expected, their situation is desperate, or they are close associates of the half-elf. The guard is well paid by Randamis and is loyal—he cannot be bought. (See the end of this section for guard statistics.)

When the PCs arrive at the manor wall, the guard hails them and asks their business. If the PCs explain, he cautiously looks at the rider and gasps as he recognizes Marlbee. The guard quickly leads the horse into the manor grounds without removing the rider, and shouts toward the manor for help. Four more guards quickly emerge from the stable behind the house and help carry the rider into Ambleer Manor. The original guard returns a moment later to question the PCs' involvement in Marlbee's condition. After he hears their story, he brings the PCs into the manor.

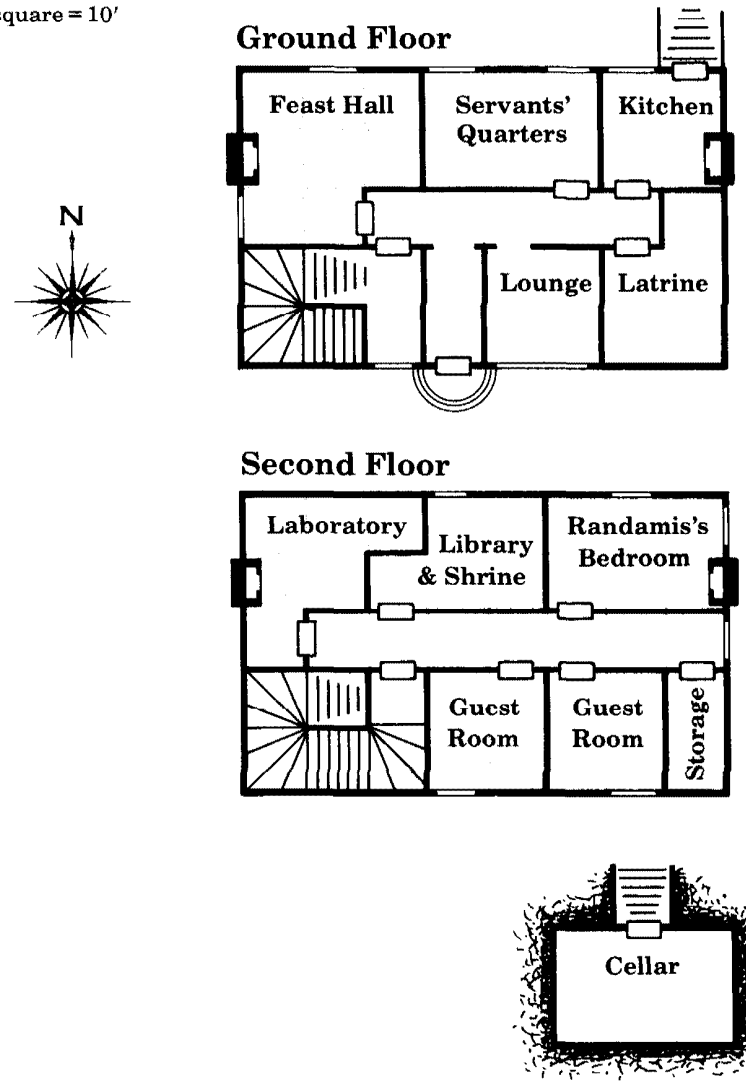
Ambleer Manor has two floors and a cellar. Rough stone steps lead up to the double front door and into a small entryway. The entryway connects through an arch to a central corridor running east and west. To the left is a staircase to the second floor. Beyond the stairs, a door opens into the feast hall, complete with oak table, several types of chairs, a stone fireplace, and trophies from Randamis's adventuring life (including a large ankheg shell made into a candle chandelier, suspended over the table). To the right, the corridor leads to the kitchen, the servants' quarters, a small lounge, and a latrine containing a bath. The cellar is reached down a staircase in the kitchen.

Up the stairs to the second floor, another corridor lies directly above the hallway below, with several doors on either side. On the left, doors lead to Randamis's laboratory, his bedroom, and a library (complete with a small shrine to Tymora). On the right, doors lead to two guest chambers and to a storage room containing Randamis's adventuring gear and other equipment.

The PCs are led through the entryway to the left into the feast hall. The previously encountered guards are there, propping the rider up in one of the chairs. The PCs are sternly invited to sit down and wait. After just a few minutes, Randamis enters.

AMBLEER MANOR

1 square = 10′



The door to the hall opens, and a servant enters bearing a candle. He turns and holds the door open, permitting another person to enter. The bent figure wears a night robe of green silk. His facial features, though withered, are plainly of part-elven descent. He shuffles slowly into the room, utters a word of command, and all the candles in the chandelier blaze at once. He glances at the guards, then at you, then goes to tend to the rider.

You watch him remove Sammson's bandages and inspect the wound. He reaches into his robe, withdraws a silver disk hanging from a chain, and closes his eyes in prayer or meditation. Moments later, the rider's wound closes, and his face loses some of its pallor. The half-elf leans back, nods at a guard, and says simply, "Ale." As the guard leaves the room, Randamis walks over to you and seats himself at the table.

"Well met," he says in a quiet, almost timid voice, "I am Randamis Ambleer. And you are . . . ?"

If the PCs do not freely give their names to Randamis, he frowns at them and asks the gate guard for information. The guard recounts everything he knows, and Randamis again questions the PCs. If they still don't respond, or are disrespectful, Randamis stands and rebukes them, telling them they are not welcome on his grounds and are to leave. He also warns them that if he finds they are responsible for Marlbee's bad condition, he will make them pay for it.

If the PCs give Randamis their names and are helpful, his manner becomes friendly and he tells them to be at ease. The guard returns with a mug of ale that Randamis gingerly pours into the rider's mouth.

Marlbee swallows, sputters, and coughs. He sits up with panic and urgency in his eyes, but the half-elf restrains him, telling him to relax. Marlbee sits back, closes his eyes, and breathes deeply. A moment later, Randamis speaks, "Now, Marlbee, tell me what has happened. Where are the others?"

The rider looks at him and shakes his head. "They are gone, Randamis, along with all our supplies. We had just come from the Wyvernwater, and we took the Old Road around Hooknose Crag. Rynstan thought we would get home sooner, and we were anxious. As we passed below Vulture Point, great birds flew at us, carrying rocks and stones in their claws. They dropped the stones onto us without warning, and they aimed well. Rynstan, Darble, and Cormric were knocked cold or killed, and I was wounded. We tried to fight and help the others, but the birds came again, and spears were thrown at us from the side of the cliff.

"We ran, hoping to get the packhorses clear of the pass, then go back and rescue the others. The birds followed, and we were hit again and again. When I found I was alone, I rode as hard as I could to get to you before I passed out. But I knew I wouldn't make it. I stopped at a large building near here and don't remember anything else. I think the packhorses strayed around Vulture Point. I'm sorry, Randamis," he sobs.

Randamis thinks for a minute, then converses with his guards. After reassuring Marlbee, he turns to you. "Thank you for bringing Marlbee back to me. Though his tidings are bad, I need to know what has happened. Some of the lost supplies are important, to say the least. The quiet life I lead is not without risks, and this was one of them; I knew that.

"I have a rare stomach ailment that can be very painful if I don't drink a tea made with special herbs. My supply is running low, and Marlbee's group had gone to purchase more in eastern Cormyr. I was anxiously awaiting their arrival. While I can send more agents to Cormyr, I fear they won't return soon enough to save me from many nights of horrid pain. But if someone were able to retrieve the herbs that Marlbee lost, I would be very grateful."

If the PCs don't volunteer, Randamis does not press the issue any further but thanks the PCs before having them escorted outside his grounds. In any case, he plans to request aid from the Dale militia to root out the ambushers, as soon as the militiamen can be rounded up (two days). If the PCs volunteer for the job, or at least show interest, Randamis continues.

"From what Marlbee has said, I don't think the ambushers are numerous. It wasn't long ago that the militia was called to clean out a group of bandits from that area, and I don't think they have had time to become a threat again. There were only five others in Marlbee's group—good servants who will be greatly missed—and a well-planned ambush executed by a skilled few could deal with them quite easily. If you wish to go, rest assured I will repay you. The risks will be great, and I consider it my duty to make the reward worth your while. You may ride my horses to Vulture Point if you leave as soon as possible."

If the adventurers agree, Randamis and three guards accompany the PCs to the stable behind the manor. They choose one horse for each PC, plus two packhorses to carry the lost supplies. If asked, they also provide weaponless PCs with a spear or short sword. They expect the party to return the horses and weapons if the mission is successful. If the PCs don't plan on leaving immediately, Randamis tells them the horses will be waiting, and they can take them when they are ready. The guards have quarters above the stable. There are 18 horses (riding, pack, and light war horses) in the barn.

The PCs must leave within two days or Randamis's offer will be terminated. The half-elf gives them directions to Vulture Point and admonishes them to be careful. However, Randamis recognizes the makings of a team of adventurers in the PCs and knows that risks and chances are their bread and water, so he encourages them. In particular, he tells them to search for a back way up to the stone monolith, as the road is probably watched by the bandits or their flying minions.

Randamis Ambleer, half-elf: AL NG; AC 9; MV 6; M7/C4; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, D 15, C 10, I 16, W 14, Ch 13; ML 13; leather armor, sling, *quarterstaff +2, wand of wonder,* potions of *treasure finding* and *plant control.*

Mage spells: *burning hands, friends, read magic, sleep; ESP, locate object, strength; dispel magic, Melf's minute meteors; magic mirror.*

Priest spells: *cure light wounds* (×2), *light* (×2), *purify food and drink; aid, charm person or mammal.*

Guards (12): AL LG; AC 7; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; leather armor, shield, short sword, spear, light crossbow.

Servants (8): AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 9.

To Vulture Point

From Ambleer Manor, it takes the PCs five hours to ride to Vulture Point. The journey takes them through the heartland of the High Dale, full of gentle slopes and farmhouses. As they journey, farmers in their fields occasionally wave and hail them. They meet no other travelers on the road.

If the DM wishes, he may stage an easy encounter on the way to get the PCs in the mood for what lies ahead. The would-be heroes could meet 1-3 stray orcs, 1-2 stirges, or a low-level human thief.

Orcs (1-3): INT average; AL LE; AC 6;

MV 9; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (battle axe); SZ M; ML 11; XP 15; MC1.

These orcs are the remnants of a larger band that was slaughtered near the trade road in Sembia. They have wandered this far north, traveling only at night, hiding and sleeping during the day. They attack the PCs out of fear, hoping to eliminate any witnesses to their presence. If one of their number is slain, the rest flee.

Stirges (1-2): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC2.

These foul creatures have taken up residence in an abandoned barn not far from the road. Although they dine mainly on the blood of cattle and farm horses, they will occasionally attack passersby on the road.

Wilas Mooder: AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; T4; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 10, I 14, W 8, Ch 7; ML 9; XP 175 (if caught thieving and brought to justice); knife, sling, 15 bullets.

Wilas Mooder is often called "Stoop" because he appears as a grubby, hunched beggar. He is known throughout the High Dale, although no one suspects his thieving abilities. Wilas begs for money while trying to determine how he can best relieve the adventurers of their purses. Then he follows them along the road, trying to move silently (45%) and hide in shadows (40%), until he can pick their pockets (45%). If the attempt fails, he will flee, avoiding combat as best he can.

As the PCs near Vulture Point, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The hills have drawn nearer, and the farmhouses of the Dale have become fewer and farther between as you traveled. Now you have entered the outskirts of the hills and found the Old Road. Ahead, you can see the looming figure of Vulture Point.
>
> Rising above the trees and rock formations around it, the great monolith looks alive. Two gigantic spurs of shale form the beak and head of a great bird. The head is balanced precariously on a thinner portion that forms the bird's neck. Below the neck, the rock widens into the face of the cliff that overlooks the Old Road. It is an ugly trick of nature, and you think it no wonder the Old Road was never well traveled. You can see several winged shapes circling the great vulture's head, and a few caves in the cliff above the road.

If the PCs wish to approach on foot from here, they must find a place to tie up the horses. About 100 yards off the trail to the west is a dry riverbed sheltered by trees. The horses will be safe if the PCs leave them here. If they leave them on the road, there is a 30% chance that a passing Dalesman will take them, thinking they are strays. If the PCs search the countryside, they will find the horses in the pasture of a local farmer who will grudgingly give them up if the PCs can convince him the horses belong to Randamis (the half-elf's mark is on the flank of each horse).

The success of the PCs' venture may well depend on how they approach Vulture Point. Dorug's vulture-minions are trained to attack any nonkobold climbing the cliff face up to the tribe's caves (see area 13). If the PCs observe the Point for at least two turns, they will notice a large crack (see area 1 below) in the east side of the monolith (the Old Road is on the south). The giant vultures circling overhead do not pass over the cracked region, being more attracted to the area around the Old Road. If the PCs observe for fewer than two turns, their chance of noticing the crack decreases to 40%.

Area 1 can be reached by hiking up the moderate slope on the north side of the monolith. The slope consists of loose rocks (shale and quartz) and juniper trees. It takes the PCs 4d6 rounds to make it to the crack. If the PCs hurry, they can reach the crack in 3d4 rounds, but they may fall (see below). Each round they spend climbing, there is a 5% chance that 1-2 of the circling giant vultures attack.

If the PCs are lucky (they climb the slope carefully and the vultures ignore them), they have no problems. If they climb hurriedly or must fight while on the slope, each PC should make a Dexterity check to avoid losing his balance (check each round of melee, only once if climbing hurriedly). Anyone losing his balance tumbles 1d2×10′ down the slope, taking 1 hp damage per 10′ fallen. Horses cannot climb the slope.

If the giant vultures attack, they fly to their roost in area 6, grab one stone in each of their claws, and reach the PCs in three rounds. They attack the PCs farthest up the slope by swooping down to 10′ above the PCs' heads and dropping the rocks. Dorug the urd has trained them well, and their dive-bombing attacks have a THAC0 of 18. PCs wearing helmets or holding shields overhead can increase their armor class by one against the dive-bombing attack. The giant vultures pass over their victims twice, dropping one stone each time. Each stone causes 1-3 hp damage. After dropping two stones each, the vultures fly back, rearm themselves, and return. If a vulture is struck or injured, it ceases its attacks and flies back to its lair (area 6). The vultures squawk while making their bombing runs, and there is a 15% chance per round that the noise alerts the creatures inside the monolith.

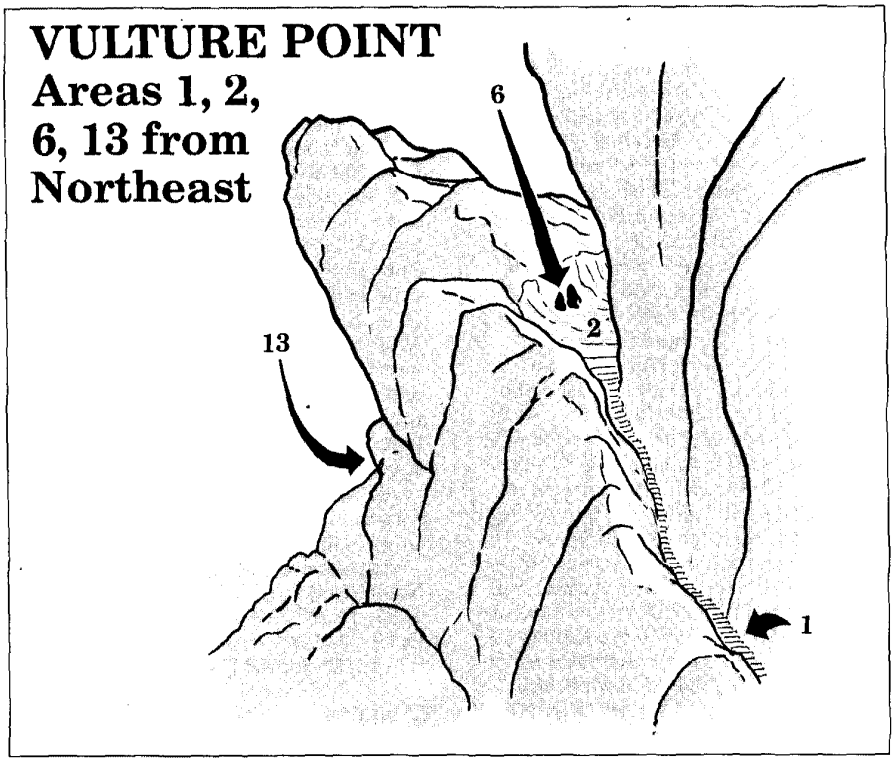
Vultures, giant (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 3, fly 24 (D); HD 2+2; hp 10, 7; THAC0 19 (18 with rocks); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (1-3 with rocks); SA dive-bomb; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175; MC3.

Vulture Point Encounter Areas

The tunnels inside Vulture Point are drafty and dry. When it rains, they become musty and wet as the water seeps through the rock and washes through the passages. The constant wind in the tunnels makes a low whine, like that of a dog far away. The howling is not loud and will not affect surprise in any way, although it may put the PCs on edge. The tunnels slope downward steeply from area 2 to area 13, varying from a 20°-30° angle. The rough stone and frequent footholds on the floor make it possible for the PCs to use their normal movement rate without danger of slipping. The ceiling in the tunnels varies from 5′-8′ (1d4+4) in height, except where noted in the text. The tunnels are carved through shale, and the stone walls are solid and rough.

1. Crack. When the PCs reach this area, any vultures that were attacking them withdraw and circle the Point. Injured vultures return to their lair. The DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Concealed between the spurs of shale that form Vulture Point's "beak" is a steep, 5′-wide crack. It slants upward and inward into the monolith's



"mouth," and is open to the sky. The floor of the crack is filled with sand, packed dirt, and small rocks.

If a PC with the tracking proficiency searches the ground in the crack, he will find the footprints of several small, dog-like creatures traveling up and down through the rift. Although the PCs may feel vulnerable traveling through the crevice, they will not be attacked here unless they are being pursued by the kobolds (see area 7). Unlike the slopes of the monolith, the crevice can be traversed without risk of falling. See the diagram that shows a view of Vulture Point from the northeast.

2. Gullet. This large, bowl-shaped area is located in the back of Vulture Point's "mouth," where the bottom spur joins the base of the "beak." Centuries of wind and rainwater have created a small depression where the carrion birds have made their nests. On the south end of the depression, where the floor rises sharply, several caves descend into the monolith. These tunnels (see areas 3, 6, and 8) eventually lead to the kobolds' home and Dorug's lair. The northern wall of this depression is sheer rock that overshadows the area from mid-morning to late afternoon. The shade keeps the young vultures cool during the heat of the day. The ground around the 15 vulture nests is covered with twigs, dried leaves, stones, and bird dung. Each nest is 1' high and 2' wide. Ten of the nests hold either 1d4+4 eggs (40%), 1d3+3 young (30%), or the skeleton of some small mammal (30%). No nest contains any treasure.

At any time during the day, 4-16 adult vultures guard the young while the others hunt the hills of Hooknose Crag and the High Dale. If the PCs climb here from the crack during the day, the vultures will be disturbed but will not cause a ruckus, and the kobolds have only a 20% chance of being alerted. At night, 3d6+6 vultures rest here. If the PCs enter the gullet at night, they may (40% chance) cause the vultures to squawk and 1-4 of the birds to attack. If the vultures are roused, the kobolds will be alert and prepared for the PCs.

Any PC who approaches one of the nests containing eggs or young is attacked by 1-4 vultures, with the same chance of alerting the kobolds as above (depending upon the time of day). Dorug has not trained these birds to drop stones, and they serve mainly as a warning system and food source for the kobolds.

Vultures, common (24): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 3, fly 27 (E); HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ S; ML 6; XP 65; MC3.

3. Water Entrance. This 6'-tall opening is easily found. The shale floor of the gullet simply opens up into a smooth corridor. When it rains, runoff water from the spur of the "mouth" collects in area 2. From there, it drains down through area 1, or runs into this large tunnel. The floor of the cave is covered with small rocks and stones, some of which are very sharp. Dorug and the kobolds collect rocks here for the giant vultures' dive-bombing attacks. Anyone prodding the floor of the cave, or walking hurriedly may (15% chance) make enough noise to alarm the kobolds in area 12. The cave slopes downward at a constant angle to area 4.

4. Pool. The water that washes down the gullet and through area 3 collects here into a 2'-deep pool. The kobolds have plugged the tiny sinkhole at the pool's bottom with a rock, and use the water for drinking and other purposes. The water is not clean enough for human consumption, however. The ceiling in this chamber is 8' high. The floor is filled with small pebbles and loose dirt. If the kobolds have been alerted to the PCs' intrusion, two of them (from area 7) are stationed here with darts. They try to get the PCs to chase them across the pit at area 5.

5. Spider Pit. The ceiling slopes down from area 4 until it is only 5' high, made of smooth, solid stone. The chamber's floor is covered with debris: rocks, bits of clothing, worthless and ruined trinkets, bones, and other junk.

The kobolds toss their garbage here to get it out of the way and to conceal a 5'-wide, 10'-deep pit in the floor. Branches and cloth have been stretched across the opening to support layer of trash. To the casual observer, the pit is detectable as a secret door. Anyone searching the floor carefully or prodding with a staff will almost certainly (95% chance) notice the pit. The kobolds know exactly where the pit is, and don't go near it.

The pit walls and floor are made of loose dirt and crumbling stone that are easily dislodged. Anyone falling into the pit takes 1-6 hp falling damage plus one additional hit point of damage from the cascade of stones and dirt that follows.

The pit is also the lair of a large spider. The beast has woven its webs across the bottom 3′ of the pit, and anyone falling into it becomes stuck as detailed in the *MC*. The spider lurks in a small niche in the wall next to its webbing, and rushes out to attack anyone who falls into the web. The kobolds are aware of the spider and often feed it wounded or dying vultures. At the bottom of the pit, beneath the spider's webbing, are 3 gp and 16 sp.

Spider, large: INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 4; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (type A); SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC1.

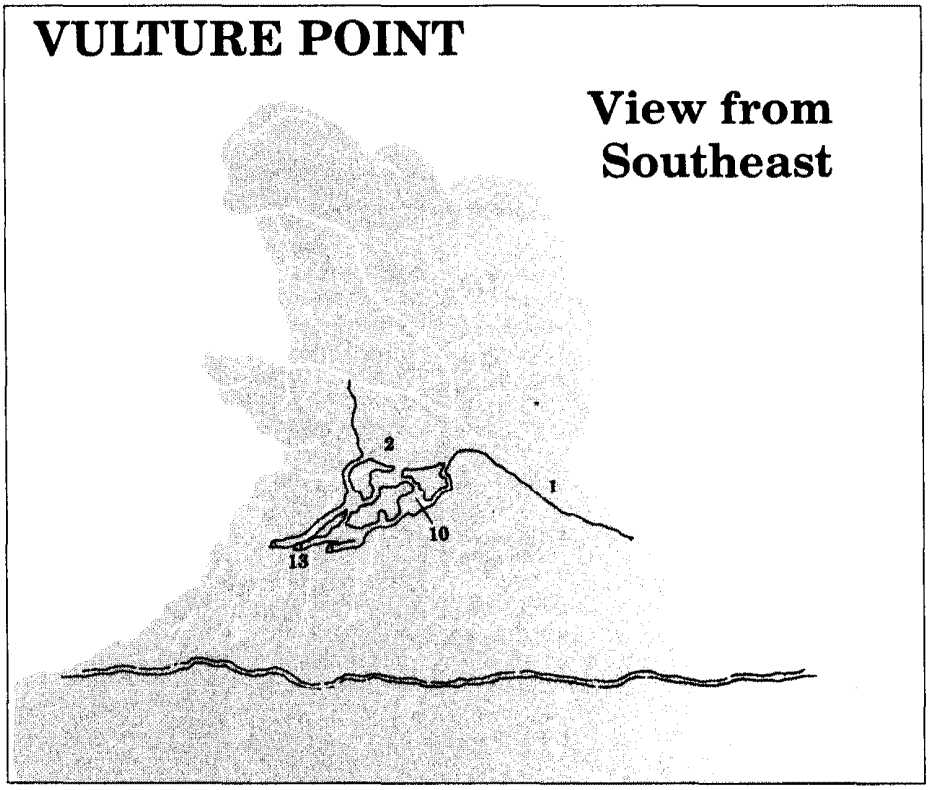
6. Giant Vulture Nests. The floor of this cave is level with the base of the depression in area 2, and remains relatively dry even during a rainstorm. The walls are solid shale, while the floor and ceiling are uneven and covered with sharp stones. Anyone falling in this room takes 1-2 hp damage.

The ceiling is 15′ high throughout the cavern and through the wide entrances from the gullet (area 2). The larger of the two entrances is big enough for Dorug's giant vultures to fly through. On the ground at the mouth of the cave is a pile of stones (taken from area 4) that the giant vultures use in their dive-bombing attacks. The urd always uses the smaller entrance to avoid a collision with the vultures.

Inside this cave are the nests of Dorug's air raiders. There are four nests, each 4′-5′ in diameter and 3′ high. The nests are made of twigs, leaves, stones, and guano, although a few larger bones can also be found. Two of the nests contain eggs (a total of five).

If the kobolds have been alerted to the PCs' intrusion in the caves, Dorug will have called all remaining giant vultures to their roost. There are five of the huge birds, including the two that circle Vulture Point and may have attacked the PCs (see areas 1 and 13). If the PCs are able to sneak into this area without alarming the vultures in area 2 or disturbing the pit in area 5, there are 0-3 (1d4−1) **giant vultures** present (hp 11, 9, 6; see "To Vulture Point"). Roll for surprise normally. The vultures squawk and thrash about, attacking the PCs if they come near the nests. The noise alerts everything in the tunnels. Grounded and in close quarters, the giant vultures have an armor class of 9. If injured, however, they try to escape through the opening to area 2. An escaping vulture makes one attack against any PC in its way (with a +1 modifier), then takes to the air.

During the night, all vultures return to their nests here and react as detailed above. The vultures are not disturbed by the urd or kobolds, and have no treasure.

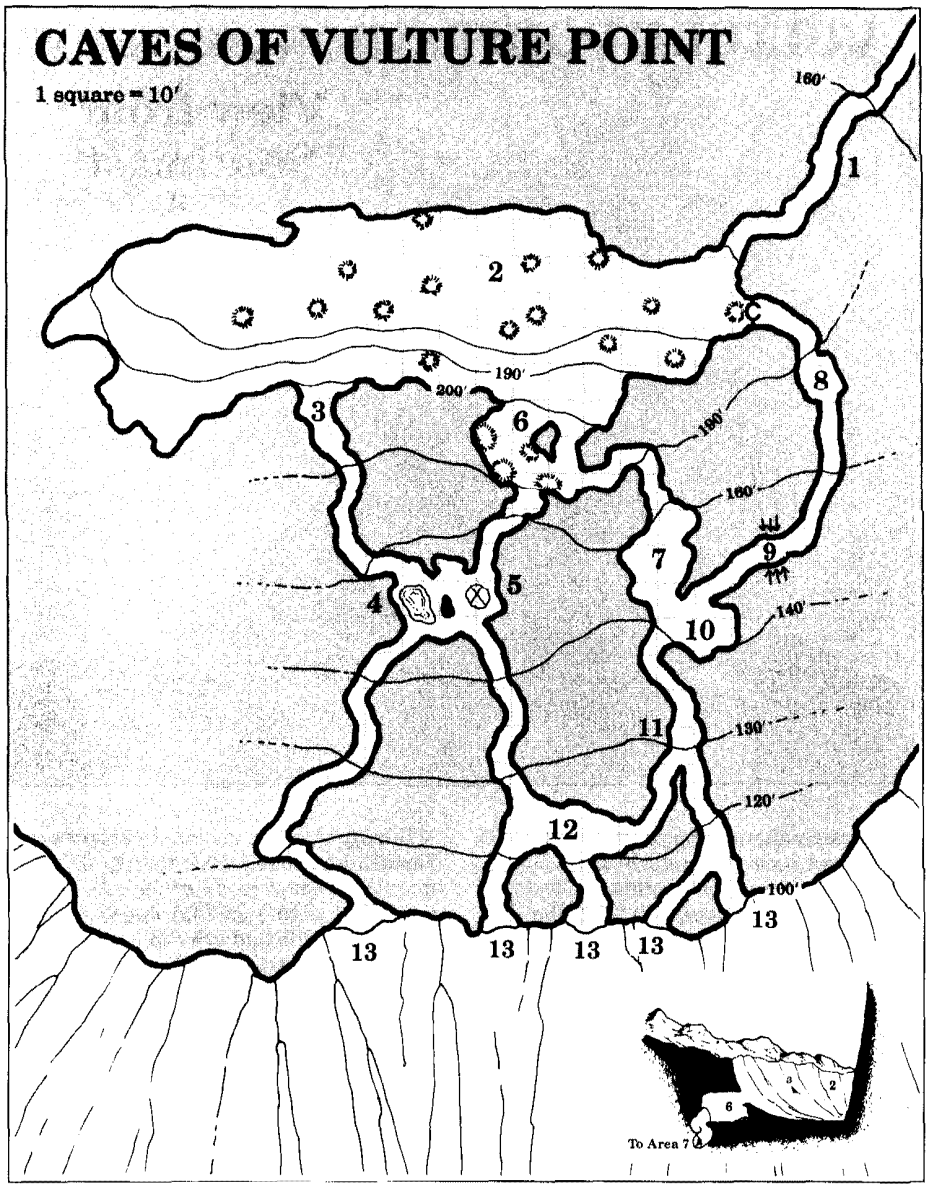


7. Kobold Cavern. The surviving members of the kobold tribe live here: 10 adult males, five adult females, and four young. Although the females and young are noncombatants (1 hp each), they stand in the background during a fight, throwing rocks and growling. These actions area distracting to the PCs and give them a −1 modifier to their attack rolls. The kobold females and young will not leave this chamber if the kobolds are alerted to intruders. If six or more males are killed, the females take the young and flee into the hills.

During the day, four male kobolds remain in this chamber to help the females prepare food and care for the young. At night, the four males go hunting in the hills and are replaced by the two kobolds that guard Dorug's cave (area 10).

If the kobolds know there are intruders in the tunnels, two of these males will seek them out. While guards are stationed throughout the tunnels, they will not engage the PCs in open melee but will try to draw them past the traps that are prepared in the caves before joining together in this room for a big fight. For instance, the two males may go to area 4 and try to lure the intruders into the pit at area 5. The kobolds pursue intruders only as far as area 1, although if Dorug is still alive he may send his vulture-minions much farther.

The 7′-high ceiling and walls of this chamber are rough shale, but the floor is smooth and covered with brightly colored rags, dung, and the bones of the kobolds' victims. Several human skeletons are present, though the bones are scattered because the young kobolds play with them. Shoved into a crack in



the wall are the treasures that Dorug has not taken from the kobolds: 8 gp and a gem worth 35 gp.

Kobold males: INT average; AL LE; AC 7; MV 6; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 9; XP 7; MC1. The males are armed with very short swords (treat as daggers) and shields.

Kobold females: AC 10; #AT 0; Dmg nil; ML 8; other statistics as for kobold males.

Kobold young: HD ¼; hp 1 each; ML 8; other statistics as for kobold females.

8. Guard Post. This 5'-diameter tunnel was carved out of solid shale by the kobolds. The floor has a light covering of sand and dirt. The opening is concealed by dead branches made to look like an empty vulture nest, and is detectable as a concealed door. If someone inspects the nest, the opening will be found. The tunnel's size reduces movement by one-third for anyone more than 5' tall, and attacks with large or slashing weapons are made at a −2 penalty.

The kobolds use this entrance most, and two guards generally stay in the area unless alerted to intruders in other parts of the tunnels. The guards (statistics as in area 7) are all armed with small spears (Dmg 1-4) and four bone darts (Dmg 1-2). They throw their darts at anyone moving down the tunnel from area 2 and then retreat to area 9. They have no treasure.

9. Bone Darts. In this stretch of the tunnel, the kobolds have fashioned six leather slingshots in small holes in the walls of the cave. The holes are at eye level for a kobold, and at waist level for a normal human. The slingshots are triggered by tripwires concealed in the dirt on the floor. Anyone passing over a tripwire has a 1-in-4 chance of triggering a pair of slingshots (one on either side of the tunnel). Each slingshot fires a bone dart (Dmg 1-2) at the person who triggers it. The kobolds know exactly where the tripwires are, and they are always careful to avoid them. Once triggered, the slingshots must be reloaded manually. They cannot be removed.

10. Urd Cave. Dorug occupies this cave and keeps the kobold tribe's treasure inside. The 20'-high ceiling allows the urd to fly if he must, and he can stay aloft for 4-8 rounds before he tires or runs into a wall. The rock walls of the cave and the floor of loose gravel and dirt have both been worked smooth.

Scattered throughout the chamber are items that the tribe has gained through Dorug's plundering. There are four sets of saddlebags. The first two hold traveling gear and many worthless trinkets (iron rings, feather quills, empty vials, etc). If the PCs search the third set of saddlebags, they will find three small cloth pouches with the words "Hold for Randamis" written on the outside. This is the mixture of crushed herbs that the half-elf needs to alleviate his pain. A fourth, blood-stained set of saddlebags contains a cockatrice feather, a jar of green dragon's blood, and a potion of *healing*.

Most of the metal items and gear from the latest raid were buried in the tribe's secret treasure cache in the hills of Hooknose Crag. The weapons were distributed to the warriors in the tribe. The leather armor worn by two of Randamis's agents has been shredded and used for clothing and armor for the kobolds.

Dorug sleeps on his personal treasure, in a small niche about 15' up the east wall of the cave. He stores his spare

weapons, 25 gp, and two jewels here, out of reach of thieving kobolds. The gems are an amethyst and an onyx (worth 100 gp and 50 gp respectively).

The urd spends hours each day training vultures, and each night he scouts the Old Road, so there is a 25% chance he will not be at Vulture Point when the PCs arrive. If Dorug is not present, there is a 10% chance each turn that he will return. If the vultures in areas 2 or 6 are disturbed, Dorug will return within five rounds. If Dorug is here during the day, he is asleep in his niche in the wall. He wakes up whenever the kobolds are alerted to intruders.

The urd has a whistle he uses to direct his giant-vulture minions to attack or go to roost. The bone whistle hangs from a leather thong around his neck, and will does not function for the PCs (it requires the urd's tongue). In melee, Dorug fights with a *spear +1,* wielding it with two hands. He acquired the magical spear from the body of Rynstan, the leader of Randamis's agents.

During the day, two kobolds (statistics as in area 7) are stationed in this room to guard the treasure and protect the urd while he sleeps. These kobolds are armed with daggers, normal darts (Dmg 1-3), and shields.

Dorug has directed the kobolds in planning a formidable defense of their tunnels, involving all of the traps and alarm systems. He has stashed five large stones in his sleeping niche that he can use as rock bombs when he fights in this chamber. The rock bombs do 1-4 hp damage each. If the kobolds have gathered in area 7 to fight the PCs, Dorug goes to their aid by trying to surprise any PCs from the rear. He also tries to draw a few adventurers into this room, giving the kobolds in area 7 better odds, and allowing him to use his rock bombs. If the kobolds are losing and Dorug is wounded, he tries to escape through area 13 and fly into the hills. If cornered and unable to flee, Dorug fights with his spear.

Dorug (urd): INT low; AL NE; AC 8; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 3; hp 11; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA rock bomb; SZ S; ML 7; XP 65; MC2.

11. Trapped Entryway. Where this tunnel widens slightly, a shaft rises 15' through the 10'-high ceiling. Several small boulders are suspended at the top of the shaft, precisely positioned and held in place by a wooden plank. Attached to the plank is a rope that hangs down into the center of the tunnel to coil on the floor. When the rope is pulled, the beam will shift and fall, dumping the stones onto the section just below the shaft.

Anyone in the section who is not surprised by the falling boulders can make a saving throw vs. paralyzation to get out of the way. Anyone caught underneath the boulders takes 2-12 hp damage and must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or be stunned for 2-8 rounds. Setting off this trap alerts all kobolds and vultures in the tunnels.

If the kobolds from the chambers to the north know the PCs are coming here from area 12, they will be prepared to spring the trap. If the PCs are hot on the kobold guards' trail through this area, the guards may try to grab and tug the rope as they are running through, hoping to dump the boulders on their pursuers. If this happens, the PCs should receive a +2 to their saving throw vs. paralyzation. It takes at least one week for the kobolds to reload this trap, which they can do only with Dorug's help.

12. Guard Post. The kobolds carved this 6'-high cave and the corridors around it out of solid rock, and the walls, ceiling, and floor are smooth. The howling of the wind in this area is loud, increasing the PCs' chances of being surprised to 4 in 10 (3 in 10 for elves). The kobolds are trained to listen beyond the howling, so they have normal chances for hearing noises and being surprised.

Two kobold guards (as in area 7) are stationed here night and day. They are armed with short swords (Dmg 1-4), four darts (Dmg 1-3), and shields. These guards are charged with watching the cliffside entrances (area 13) and surveying the Old Road for any sign of approaching travelers. During the day, the kobolds have a hard time looking outside of the caves because of the bright light, and spend most of their time in this chamber, mending weapons and eating.

When the guards are alerted to intruders in the tunnels, they hurry to area 7 to fight alongside the other kobolds. If intruders approach by climbing up the cliffside to area 13, or down the corridor from area 4, the kobolds try to lure them into the boulder trap at area 11. They use their darts as much as possible, and they try to set off the boulder trap as they go past.

The spears and rocks the kobolds use in their ambushes on the Old Road are kept here in a jumbled pile. There are 18 small spears, 16 darts, and 30 sharp-edged stones (Dmg 1-2) that can be thrown from the ledges at area 13.

13. Ledges. These areas can be reached either by climbing the face of the slope, or through the tunnels from areas 4, 11, and 12. The tunnels that lead here from the kobolds' caves descend at a steady angle, then level out just before they emerge on the side of the slope.

The kobolds have formed these ledges into protective balconies from which they can attack passersby with spears and rocks from area 12. When Dorug instructs them to prepare the ambush, 10 kobold warriors crouch on these ledges (two per ledge) until the giant vultures dive-bomb the travelers. The cave openings on the ledges are only 4' tall, overlooking the southern face of the monolith. They are barely visible from the road below.

Anyone climbing to the ledges from the Old Road has chosen a very difficult route into Vulture Point. Thieves have a −20% modifier to their climb-walls ability. In addition, all climbers must make Dexterity checks each round they are involved in combat. If a check fails, the climber lose his balance and tumbles 10' down the slope, suffering 1-4 hp damage. During the day, 1-2 giant vultures watch this area (the place where they get most of their meals) and attack climbing PCs (see "To Vulture Point"). The noise of combat on the slope has a 70% chance of alerting the kobolds in area 12, who will react accordingly.

Concluding the Adventure

Dorug and his minions will never become a serious threat to the people of the High Dale. The Old Road is rarely traveled, and then usually by wanderers and transients the Dalefolk find undesirable. However, when an occasional farmer or messenger, such as Randamis's agents, is missing, it can mean a lot. If the PCs are successful in rooting out the urd and his minions, the Dalefolk take no immediate notice, but the tale creeps into conversations in the inns and taverns.

If the PCs return Randamis's mer-

chandise to him (specifically his herbal mixture), he will be very grateful. He talks about the event, and the PCs' courage and abilities, among his associates. In fact, he seems to be in better health than he has been in for a long time. Randamis offers to pay the PCs 100 gp each for their services, and tells them they are welcome at Ambleer Manor anytime. If asked, he will provide clerical or magical training to a PC (but not both training and 100 gp). The details of such an arrangement are left to the DM but should include a lot of manual labor around Ambleer Manor, as well as journeying into other lands in search of exotic items.

The half-elf also has connections with the local constable, a 6th-level lawful-good fighter named Zhaddule Feathertooth. Feathertooth is a skilled and rugged man, but he is also impulsive, judgmental, and intolerant of foolishness. He commands the local militia and can train people in the use of the weapons he carries plus the scimitar, short bow, and spear. He is not friendly, and would not bat an eye at the PCs' success at Vulture Point if not for Randamis's persuasion.

Constable Zhaddule Feathertooth: AL LG; AC 6; MV 9; F6; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 14, C 15, I 11, W 10, Ch 14; ML 15; studded leather armor, shield, broad sword, dagger, light crossbow.

In addition, innkeeper Sammson Silverload may consider training a PC in fighting or thievery. He would require a lot of help around the Dusty Road Inn in exchange for the training, but would also provide the PCs with room and board. The travelers who frequent the Dusty Road Inn might also get the PCs started on their long road of adventure.

If the PCs are defeated by Dorug and his minions, Randamis will fall very ill. He asks Constable Feathertooth to round up the militia and clean out Vulture Point. Ten militiamen are available, all fighters of levels 0-1. Until Randamis recovers a supply of the herbs, he lives in constant pain, and he is unable to function as a scholar or a landowner.

If the PCs are unable to retrieve Randamis's herbs but escape Vulture Point alive, Randamis will heal them and commiserate with them. When they have recovered, he asks them to either try again or travel to Immersea (in eastern Cormyr) to buy more of the herb. If the PCs decide to try again, Randamis convinces Zhaddule to send the 10 members of the militia to aid the PCs. They may be more successful the second time.

The PCs could work for Randamis again in the future. The missions the priest/mage would send them on are left up to the DM. However, it is possible that the PCs have had their fill of adventuring life during their mission to Vulture Point, and want to return to the "good old days" when they sat around in the Dusty Road Inn, listening to tales of other's quests and adventures. Ω

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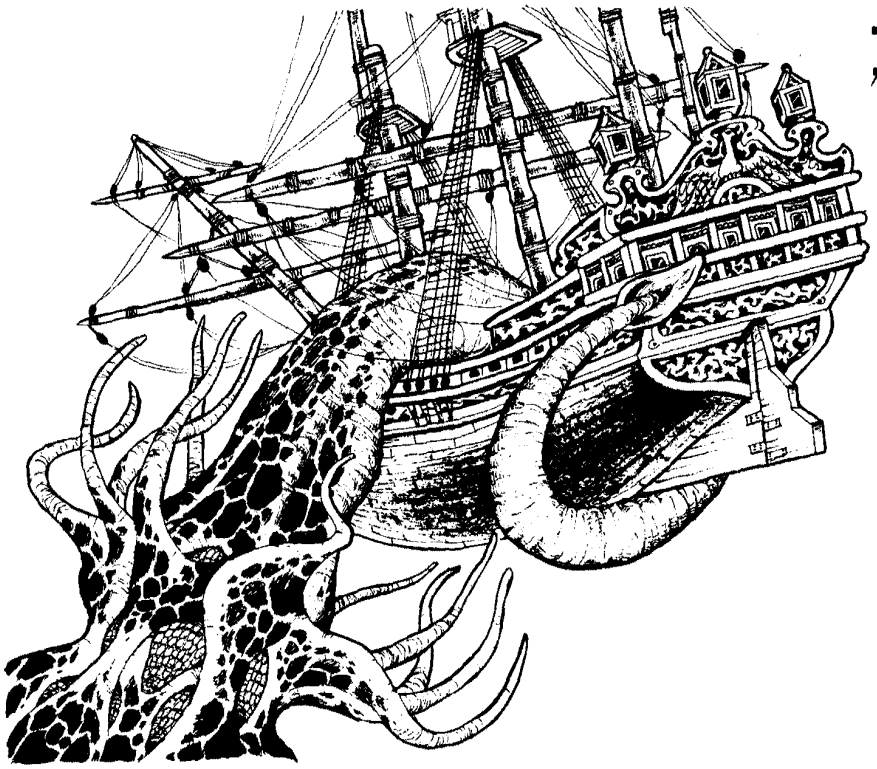


FLOWFIRE

BY STEVEN KURTZ

Nine intriguing encounters for travelers in the Flow

Artwork by Steve Schwartz

In order to postpone his inevitable graduation, Steve has recently immersed himself in TSR's Arabian Adventures campaign. He has just finished his first boxed set for TSR, A Dozen and One Adventures, *and is currently writing a chapter for* The City of Delights.

"Flowfire," like all of Steve's spelljamming modules, was playtested by Wolfgang with his invincible crew of wacky gnomes and giant space hamsters.

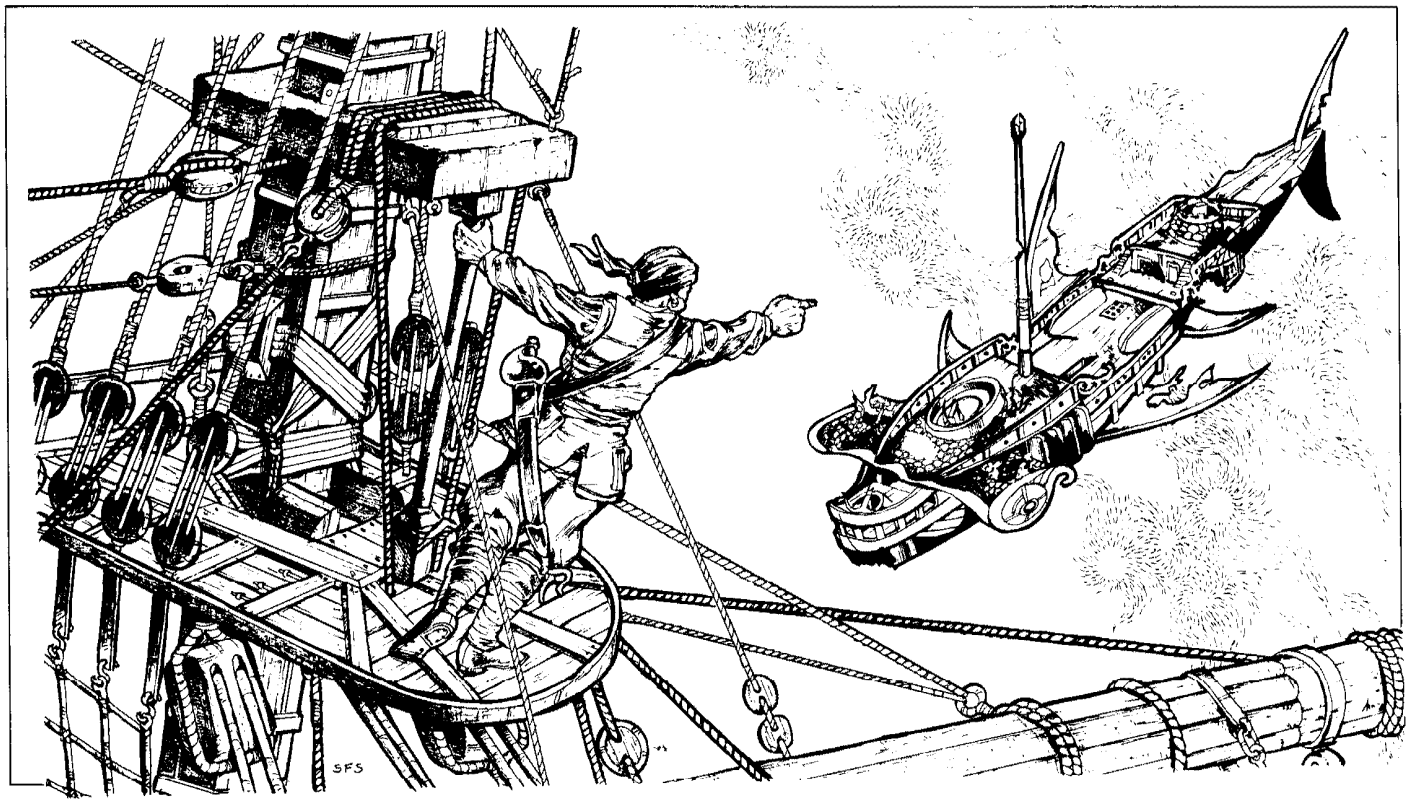
"Flowfire" is a series of AD&D® game SPELLJAMMER® mini-adventures for any size party with a spelljamming ship. These encounters work best with mid-level PCs (5th-9th level) of any classes or alignments. The Dungeon Master should have access to the SPELLJAMMER boxed set.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

All of these mini-adventures take place when the party travels the phlogiston. However, several of these can easily be modified to take place in wildspace if desired (the castaway, ephemeral, and flow barnacle encounters should take place only in the phlogiston). Because of the vast nature of the Flow, random encounters take place very rarely. However, if the DM feels inclined to liven things up on a long Flow voyage, these mini-adventures are presented as a random encounter table.

For every week of travel in the Flow, there is a 1-in-20 chance for an encounter. If an encounter is indicated, or if the DM feels one is called for, consult "Mini-Adventures in the Flow." An encounter can be determined by rolling percentile dice or can be hand picked from the list to suit the DM's campaign. Although many more encounters are given here than are warranted by a few weeks' travel in the Flow, the remainder can easily be used throughout a spelljamming campaign to cut DM preparation time.

DM Reminder: Combat in the Flow is an extremely risky proposition because of the highly combustible nature of the phlogiston. Remember that incendiary or heat-producing spells are likely to set off explosions.



Mini-Adventures in the Flow

(01-20) Derelict

The PCs find the remains of a ship drifting through the phlogiston. The first time this encounter is called for, the PCs stumble on the wreckage of a galleon. The ship appears to have been heavily damaged by flowfire resulting from phlogiston explosions, but its name is still visible: *Speedwell.* The air envelope is fouled, and the derelict contains 21 decomposing bodies, most of them charred. All of the armaments are destroyed, and someone has already salvaged the ship's helm. There is plenty of ammunition but little in the way of treasure on board. The ship is still salvageable (11 hull points remaining out of 40), but she needs about a month in dry dock to be fixed up. Alternatively, the ship could sold as-is in just about any spaceport for no more than 6,000 gp.

Play up this encounter as if it were any normal ship-to-ship engagement (the *Speedwell* won't move, but the PCs don't know that). Since there are a number of derelicts to be encountered throughout the Flow and wildspace, never let on whether a drifting ship is abandoned or only pretending to drift. Not every ship the PCs meet will be a death trap.

On subsequent derelict encounters, roll 1d12 and consult the following table:

Roll	Derelict
1-2	Dragonfly
3-4	Wasp
5-7	Tradesman
8	Squidship
9	Damselfly
10	Hammership
11	Galleon
12	DM's choice

Derelicts have 10-60% maximum hull points and either fouled or deadly air (50% chance each). Only 10% of derelicts have an intact helm (a minor helm for ships of less than 50 tons, a major helm aboard larger vessels such as hammerships).

A thorough search of a derelict might uncover a small treasure cache (10% chance). This cleverly hidden loot (types J-U, roll 1d12) should be randomly determined by the DM. Resale value of a derelict is roughly 10%-40% of the ship's full price.

(21-25) The Davey

Occasionally, someone who falls overboard in the Flow (during combat, a Flow storm, etc.) is preserved in suspended animation by the phlogiston. Such a castaway is called a "davey," a human term of unknown origin (see SJR1 *Lost Ships* for more information on daveys). The being may have been floating in the Flow for anywhere from 100-1,000 years, so some degree of culture shock on reawakening can be expected.

The PCs are alerted when something bumps into the side of their ship. They notice the stone-gray body of a humanoid of some kind being swept aft in the ship's gravity plane. Unless the PCs react quickly, the body will be reclaimed by the Flow.

If they decide to pull the body on board, the PCs discover a human male, roughly 6' tall. The man wears only tattered silk pantaloons, sandals, wrist bracers, a turban, and a waist sash (concealed in the sash are a complete set of lock picks, a garrotte, a long curved knife, and a starwheel with enough smoke powder for six shots). A starwheel is a wheel-lock pistol, a weap-

on relatively common among spelljammers. Details about this weapon can be found on page 45 of the *Concordance of Arcane Space* or in *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures*, pages 12-13.

Soon after the man is brought on board, his skin color slowly changes from stone-gray to the color of burnished ebony. Within two rounds, the man's eyes snap open, wild with anger, and he jumps to his feet with catlike grace, breathing heavily. As he surveys the PCs' ship, his breathing calms and his eyes grow puzzled. At last he flashes a dazzling smile, laughing in a deep bass voice, and bows to the PCs, thanking them in accented Common for saving his life.

He proudly introduces himself as Smoke, first mate aboard a hammership named the *Sapphire*. The last thing he remembers is the *Sapphire* encountering a radiant dragon in the Flow. The dragon had wrapped its tail around the hull, and the ship was shaken, pitching him overboard. He remembers drifting away from the battle, falling asleep, and waking aboard the PCs' ship.

Smoke's unfailing ability to melt away into darkness and move with utter silence earned him his nickname aboard the *Sapphire* over three centuries ago. He is cunning, ambitious, and highly adaptable (he won't be too concerned that he has been floating in the Flow for so long), but he is also an extremely private person. He has too much pride to reveal any secrets about his former ship or captain. These details can be made up by the DM to suit the nature of the campaign, but hints of Smoke's background should be given slowly as he gets used to the PCs and their ship.

Smoke (human): AL N; AC 2; MV 12; T8; hp 33; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1/3; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; S 17, D 18, I 14, Ch 15; PP 40%, OL 50%, FT 55%, MS 95%, HS 95%, DN 40%, CW 95%, RL 0%; *bracers of defense AC 6*. Weapon proficiencies: garotte, scimitar, dagger (thrown), starwheel. Nonweapon proficiencies: reading lips, rope use, seamanship (helpful aboard both sea- and spacegoing vessels), tumbling.

In subsequent adventures, Smoke quietly takes up a command position aboard the PCs' ship. He quickly earns the respect (and fear) of the crew, after a few painful "accidents" with those sailors or gunners who grumble or challenge his authority. Although his methods might be questionable to characters of good alignment, Smoke's training certainly does wonders for the combat readiness of the PCs' ship. Crew under his direction will become crack sailors and gunners in six weeks (normally it takes 12).

Smoke is an experienced (if somewhat mysterious) space adventurer, a definite asset to any crew. For saving his life, he will serve the PCs loyally for one year. Unless they make him a monetary offer he cannot refuse (at least a 5% share of captured booty), he will seek employment elsewhere at the end of the year.

(26-40) Barnacle Field

The PCs' ship flies into a cloud of flow barnacles. Roughly three quarters of these nonintelligent creatures attempt to attach themselves to the ship, while the rest attack crewmembers. If not removed from the ship, each attached barnacle will produce four young, eventually turning the PCs' vessel into a spacefaring barnacle colony.

Flow barnacles (2-40): INT non; AL nil; AC 4; MV fly 16 (D); HD 1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 6; SA grip, 1 hp/round nutrient drain; SZ T; ML 20; XP 35; *Lost Ships*/86. One in four of these creatures contains a moonpearl, worth 1,000-5,000 gp.

(41-47) Space Whales

The PCs sight a herd (also called a pod) of kindori basking in the gentle red glow of the phlogiston. When spotted, the pod is roughly three miles (10 hexes on the tactical movement map) to port of the PCs' vessel. If the PCs approach within a mile (four hexes), 1-4 male kindori detach from the herd and attempt to determine their relative dominance by attacking the PCs' ship (the PCs have had the bad luck of approaching a pod during mating season).

Kindori (2-8): INT low; AL LN; AC 5; MV 18; HD 20; THAC0 3; #AT 1 (tail); Dmg 3-30; SA flash of blinding light (save or be blinded for 4-16 rounds); MR 5%; SZ G (80'); ML 13; XP 11,000; *Lorebook of the Void*/79. The kindori will use their blinding ability if outclassed, in order to facilitate a retreat. They have no treasure.

(48-55) Flow Spirits

Since ephemerals are mostly transparent, they are difficult to spot in the phlogiston. If the PCs have posted a deck watch, there is only a 1-in-3 chance that the spirits will be detected before they slip on board.

Once on board, the undead attempt to locate the helmsman, attacking him relentlessly until either all the ephemerals are destroyed or one of them gains possession of the helmsman's body.

Once this is accomplished, they turn the ship to the nearest crystal shell and are laid to rest once the ship enters the sphere.

Ephemerals (1-8): INT very; AL NE; AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA drain intelligence; SD hit only by magical weapons, regeneration; SZ M; ML 9; XP 975; *Lorebook of the Void*/76.

(56-64) Flow Pirates

The PCs have had the questionable luck of encountering the *Spectral Hand*, a bone-white squidship commanded by Tomigan Rex, a smuggler who occasionally augments his income through piracy. He has a notorious and nasty reputation; the PCs should be cautioned (by their hesitant mates) that few people have crossed Tomigan Rex and survived to boast of their accomplishment.

Tomigan is currently traveling to Realmspace with a cargo of smoke powder for the Black Widow Nation, a fleet of drow with whom he occasionally does business. As a result, he will not provoke the PCs, sailing by at a respectable distance (10 hexes) with weapons clearly unmanned (although this is an illusion).

Since the DM might care to have the PCs meet up Tomigan at a later date (or if the PCs are itching for a fight and attack the *Spectral Hand*), the stats of Tomigan, his officers, and crew are given below:

Tomigan Rex: AL N(E); AC −3; MV 9; F13; hp 95; THAC0 8; #AT 5/2 (with long sword); Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with long sword; SD fire resistance; ML 16; S 17, D 17, C 16, I 15, W 14, Ch 15; XP 10,000; *plate mail +2*, shield, starwheel (Dmg 1d4 plus special), magical sword.

Tomigan keeps two starwheels (with enough smoke powder for 16 shots) stuffed in his belt (he certainly won't use these weapons in the Flow), and a long sword named Quencher (*frost brand +3, +6 vs. fire using/dwelling creatures*) slung in a sheath across his back (the blade provides fire resistance

only when drawn). He wears a *ring of djinni summoning* and a *ring of invisibility.* In a belt pouch, Tomigan stores two potions of *extra-healing* and two potions of *invulnerability.* He will not hesitate to use these potions in a fight.

Tomigan is a tall man, quick in spite of his size. He typically wears bone-white plate mail (in some spheres he is called the Ivory Knight, although his actions are often far from chivalrous). He displays his coat of arms proudly on his shield: a white outstretched hand on a black field.

When not in the Flow, Tomigan's favorite tactics include using his ring to summon the genie Samir. Because extraplanar creatures cannot be summoned into the Flow, Tomigan calls Samir up before leaving a crystal sphere and keeps him on hand for the duration of the voyage. The djinn is ordered to cloak the topdecks in illusion, making the weapons appear unloaded and the deck deserted, so that a passing ship will let its guard down. While the ships are cruising past, Samir is sent to fly *invisibly* to scout out the opposing ship.

Samir (djinn): INT average; AL CG; AC 4; MV 9, fly 24; HD 7+3; hp 29; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA special; SD special; SZ L; ML 14; XP 2,000.

If the approaching ship is small (24 tons or less), Tomigan might ask to be carried over *invisibly* with his sister, Tatiana, so that they can slay the helmsman and disable the ship without risking the *Spectral Hand.* Against larger ships (25-45 tons), Tomigan won't risk boarding with his genie and sister, preferring to use his crew to best effect (they need the target practice, anyway). Tomigan will almost never attack a larger ship (more than 45 tons) unless the crew appear to be green groundlings.

Like her brother Tomigan, Tatiana is cold, calculating, and ruthless. She supports Tomigan in all of his efforts, and although working with drow makes her nervous, she hopes the trade of smoke powder for adamantite and sleep poison will make them so rich they can retire from spelljamming and live the rest of their lives in leisure at Refuge, a small safe crystal sphere run by the Arcane (see DRAGON® Magazine #159). A small, withdrawn woman, she goes about dressed in mouse-colored robes. When she speaks, her voice is soft, barely above a whisper. Some men (who failed miserably in their attempts to court her) have compared her disposition to that of a coiled snake, others with that of a neogi. Neither description, however, does her justice.

Tatiana Rex: AL NE; AC 2; MV 12; W11 (transmuter); hp 58; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD *stoneskin* absorbs eight attacks, *armor* spell, +2 bonus on saves (*cloak of protection +2*); ML 14; I 17, D 16, C 18; XP 6,000.

Tatiana has cast an *armor* spell on herself. She wears a *cloak of protection +2* and wields a *wand of frost* (24 charges). She keeps the wand tethered to her belt, so she can quickly drop it in melee. Her memorized spells include: *affect normal fires, magic missile* (×2), *shield, sleep; darkness 15' radius, invisibility, mirror image, strength* (to be cast on Tomigan), *web; airsphere*, chill fire**, enhance rating**, fly, slow; dimension door, improved invisibility, spark burst** (×2); *chaos, cone of cold, feeblemind, teleport.* (Spells marked with a single asterisk are from SJR1 *Lost Ships*; those with a double asterisk are from the *Concordance of Arcane Space*).

Sometimes, if the *Spectral Hand* is outclassed in a battle, Tatiana will take the helm so the ship can make a quick getaway. With Tatiana at the helm, the squidship has an SR of 5.

The first officer, Grifter, is a renegade captain formerly of the Tenth Pit. He refuses to mention his mysterious (capital) offense to anyone but has served Tomigan faithfully for the past four years. Grifter rules the crew with an iron hand; punishment for disobeying orders is swift and brutal. He is a bearlike man, with a grizzly salt-and-pepper beard flowing down across the front of his banded armor. He typically leads boarding parties with a bloodcurdling scream.

Grifter: AL LE; AC −1; MV 12; F9; hp 88; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized in scimitar; ML 16; S 18/23, D 17, C 17; XP 4,000; *banded mail +1,* shield, *scimitar of speed +2.*

As a favor for services rendered, the Matriarch of the Black Widow Nation assigned Nedylene Telenna, one of her lesser, more adventurous priestesses, to Tomigan's ship. In reality, Nedylene has been observing how Tomigan acquires smoke powder, so that the drow nation can obtain it in the future without using an expensive middleman.

Nedylene currently serves as the helmsman aboard the *Spectral Hand,* moving the squidship with an SR of 4. Like most of her race, she is aloof and cruel, detesting the crew with whom she serves (except for Tomigan, whom she finds intriguing). She spends all of her time below decks with the major helm (refer to the standard deck plan of a squidship; room 1 on the main deck) and hence has armed herself with drow arms and armor. Since drow equipment is destroyed by sunlight, she never ventures outside her cabin, even if the ship has been boarded.

Nedylene Telenna, female drow priestess: AL CE; AC −4; MV 12; C8; hp 40; THAC0 16 (13 with mace); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SD *darkness, faerie fire, dancing lights, levitate, know alignment, detect magic, dispel magic, suggestion, detect lie, clairvoyance* each once/day; +2 on saves vs. magic; MR 66%; ML 14; D 16, C 16, W 17; XP 5,000; *drow chain mail +3, drow buckler +3, drow mace +3* (Dmg 1d6+3). Although Nedylene has no spells due to spelljamming, her spell-like abilities are not impaired.

For travel in the Flow, the *Spectral Hand* is outfitted with a medium catapult and two medium ballistas on the forecastle, and two medium ballistas on the aftcastle. These armaments are tended by a total of 11 crewmen. Nine additional crewmen are stationed about the ship as damage/fire control teams (and as replacement crew should anything happen to the gunners). Another 10 crewmen are stationed on the quarter deck; armed with long bows, they will fire volleys at the crew of an opposing ship when they pass within range.

Crew (30); AL LN-LE; AC 7; MV 9; F2; hp 2-20; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; XP 35; studded leather armor. In addition to the weapons noted above, the crew are all outfitted with battle axes and daggers. They hold no special loyalty to Tomigan, and will surrender willingly if he and his officers are slain. Due to the brutal code of discipline enforced by Grifter, they behave as a crack crew, gaining a −2 bonus to initiative dice.

If the *Spectral Hand* is grappled, boarded, and captured, the PCs can discover the following treasure (refer to the squidship deck plans in the SPELLJAMMER boxed set):

— A major helm (room 1, main deck).

— A chest in the captain's cabin (room 4, main deck) containing 5,421 gp (crew payroll), a pouch with 12 100-gp pearls, and Tatiana's traveling spell book (con-

taining her memorized spells plus *detect magic, read magic, identify, armor,* and *stoneskin).*

— The crew quarters (areas 2 and 5, cargo deck) contain 112 gp and 1,569 sp (crew gambling money). Well secured in the hold (area 1, cargo deck), the PCs may discover the *Spectral Hand*'s cargo: two bombards and enough smoke powder to fire 20 bombard shots (all of this is packed in fire-resistant crates).

(65-72) Whale Hunters

The herding season of the kindori often brings whalers prowling in their wake. Kindori oil, if properly treated, can be either a powerful incendiary (similar to Greek fire, but causing +1 hp damage per hit die) or a bright light source. Kindori eyes can be used in the enchantment of *wands of illumination, sun blades,* or even potions of *rainbow hues.* As a result of increasing demand for these substances, an increasing number of spacefarers are turning their skill to hunting space whales.

While traveling through the Flow, the PCs drop out of spelljamming speed to witness a herd of kindori fleeing a tradesman, which is painted a faint red so that it blends easily into the glow of the phlogiston. As the PCs approach, they can see that one of the space whales has been slain by six tethered ballista bolts and is quickly being drawn back to the deck of the tradesman, where it is lashed to the deck by eight large humanoids.

The tradesman then sets off in pursuit of the scattered kindori herd, ignoring the PCs' ship (unless it moves to attack them). In this case, the tradesman will attempt to close at an SR of 2 to heavy ballista range (two hexes). Long before this, the PCs will be able to see that the tradesman is crewed by ogres, 16 of which are visible on the topdecks.

The PCs have stumbled across a group of spelljamming ogres who hunt kindori for their blubber, which will be transported back to an ogre mammoth battleship in Greyspace for processing into incendiary oil. The tradesman is armed with four heavy ballistas (two on the foredeck, another two on the aftdeck) tended by two ogres each (eight total arming the ballistas). Another eight ogres are on deck, waiting with tall spears (1d10+2 hp damage each) to hurl at approaching targets (like kindori) within 100 yards, or to repel boarders.

Ogres (16): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 31, 28, 25 (+2), 24 (+2), 23 (+2), 22, 21 (+2) 18, 17 (+2), 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type; SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; MC1; XP 175.

The ogres are lead by a half-ogre, Thrash Groin-Guard by name. He is the undisputed captain of the ship, and the ogres will fight to the death for him. Short-tempered and easily provoked, Thrash does not fight fair (as his nickname would attest).

Thrash Groin-Guard, half-ogre: INT average; AL LE; AC −2; MV 12; F9; hp 81; THAC0 12; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; SZ L; ML 14; S 18/00, D 17, C 16, Ch 15; XP 5,000; *field plate +1.* Thrash can use a long bow, knee-spike (see below), spear, halberd, long sword, and hand axe. When entering melee, he tends to fight in the following manner:

In the first round he attacks with a *long sword +2* named Kleaver in one hand (1d8+8 hp damage, adjusted THAC0 7) and a *hand axe +1* named Krusher (1d6+7 hp damage, adjusted THAC0 10) in the other.

The next round he attacks twice with his sword and once with his axe. If he scores a hit with the sword and axe in the same round, he attacks twice with his knee-spike, aiming for the groin of his opponent. The first time this is attempted, the victim has to roll for surprise or be surprised for one round. Thrash's attack is at an adjusted THAC0 9 (opponent gets no shield bonus unless covered by a large shield) and inflicts 1d3+6 hp damage plus poison. The poison has an onset time of 1-4 rounds and lasts for 2-5 rounds (during which the victim takes 1d6 hp damage per round, half damage if a save vs. poison is made).

The tradesman is piloted by the ogre mage Yultin, a shaman priest of 6th level, using a minor helm located in the rear of the ship (refer to tradesman deck plans in the SPELLJAMMER boxed set, area 12). Yultin hates Thrash and has kept himself up late at night wondering why the Iron Duke from the mammoth ship put the dim-witted half-ogre in charge instead of him.

Yultin, ogre-mage shaman: INT high; AL LE; AC 4; MV 9, fly 15 (B); HD 5+2; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA *charm person, sleep, cone of cold* (8d8 hp damage, save for half damage) all cast once/day; SD assume *gaseous form* once/day; *fly* (for 12 turns); become *invisible;* cause *darkness* in a 10' radius, *polymorph* to human form; *regenerate* 1 hp/round; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MC1. Although Yultin has no priest spells memorized due to spelljamming, his spell-like abilities are not impaired.

During a boarding attempt, Yultin will fly on board the PCs' ship invisibly and watch the outcome of the battle from there. If the tide of the battle seems to favor Thrash, Yultin will join the battle, casting a *sleep* spell on the PCs' crew from a concealed position and following up with his *cone of cold* spell. Finally, he attempts to *charm* a lesser NPC (a henchman of the PCs perhaps) into defending him.

If the PCs are obviously winning, Yultin searches the battleground for a fallen crewmember and pushes the body overboard. The ogre-mage then *polymorphs* into the shape of the crewmember and helps fight the ogres! At the earliest opportunity, he leaves the PCs' ship at a spaceport or helps a more powerful potential ally (like a radiant dragon) conquer the PCs.

If the PCs search the tradesman, they can discover the clan treasure in Thrash's smelly quarters in a locked iron trunk: 19,350 sp, 3,799 gp, and 23 gems (eight small garnets worth 100 gp, five dusky topazes worth 250 gp, eight ruby chips worth 100 gp, a flawed emerald worth 500 gp, and a small moonpearl worth 1,000 gp). In addition to the slain kindori tethered to the side of the tradesman, there are six tons of kindori blubber in the cargo holds (main deck, area 7). To an interested buyer, the carcass and blubber would be worth 15,000 gp. Alternatively, the PCs might want to find out how to refine the kindori remains into incendiary oil.

(73-85) Krajen

The PCs vessel drops out of spelljamming speed to encounter something about 12 hexes (3 miles) away, 30° off the port bow. Unless they have magical aid to augment vision (or have encountered a krajen before), the PCs won't be able to identify the creature in the poor light of the phlogiston until the monster is four hexes away. By then, it will be too late for the PCs to run away.

Krajen, adult: INT semi; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 12; hp 73; THAC0 9; #AT 1 (central tentacle)/12 (sentry tentacles); Dmg 3-18 (central tentacle)/1-3 (sentry tentacles); SA paralysis, crush; SZ G; ML 13; XP 8,000; *Lorebook of the Void*/81.

The adult krajen will attack the PCs' ship with its central tentacle for 1-3 points of hull damage. On a roll of 18 or better, the central tentacle wraps around the ship, inflicting an additional 1-3 hull points that round, plus 1-3 hull points of damage each subsequent round until the krajen is slain.

Meanwhile, the 12 sentry tentacles tipped with paralysis poison (save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 3-30 rounds) lash out at members of the crew. The krajen fights until slain.

If the PCs slay the krajen and dissect the remains, they will discover the following treasure in the creature's food sac, located underneath its hard shell:

— 481 pp

— Gleaming plate mail of dwarven manufacture, sized for a tall human, etched with gold and enchanted to protect it against all forms of corrosion and tarnishing. This is actually a set of *plate mail of continual cleanliness +2,* described in SJR2 *Realmspace.*

— A beautiful figurehead of a protecting angel or solar, painted with a fire-red body and golden wings. If the figurehead is attached to any ship, it confers complete fire resistance (immunity to normal fires, +4 on saves vs. magical fire for half or no damage) to the entire vessel.

— A *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic.*

— A *dagger +1.*

— A shiny pike head. If attached to a haft, it will make a *boarding pike +1.*

(86-00) Chest

Every now and then, the PCs should come across a piece of debris floating in the Flow. The first time this encounter is indicated, the deck watch calls out that a large chest of some kind has gotten caught in the ship's air envelope. If the PCs desire, the chest can be pulled aboard.

The oak surface of the chest is gray with age. Nevertheless, the PCs can make out barely legible runes inscribed on the outer surface, especially near the rusty lock (−20% on a thief's attempts to pick the lock). A priest with religion skill should be able to identify these as runes to ward away evil. A *comprehend languages* spell will confirm this and reveal that other runes state, "Here Sleepes Theorl Bendorin/Laide to Reste Byfore His Tyme/Homewarde May He Safely Floate."

Anyone who attempts to open the chest triggers an old but powerful *glyph of warding* (save vs. spells at −2 or be blinded). The blindness is permanent and can be reversed only if the PC atones for disturbing the eternal rest of the dead. Inside, the PCs find the remains of a young boy, no more than 10 or 11 years old, hugging his knees. There is no treasure in the chest. The DM can elaborate on this encounter if desired, but it is left as a mystery for the PCs to ponder.

On subsequent encounters of this type, the PCs can run into pieces of ship's hulls, a ballista, perhaps even an intact flitter (curiously deserted with no helm on board) or a chest full of iron bombard shot. The DM is encouraged to think up a list of future debris encounters, possibly interspersing some relatively minor treasure along with the junk. Ω

LAST OF THE IRON HOUSE

BY JASPER JONES

From dark caverns to a darker ocean

Artwork by Jim Holloway

Jasper writes: "I modelled the caverns of Lugarno on caves I saw in Mexico. The dwarven bandits are modelled on a company of dwarven Landsknechts in my campaign."

This AD&D® adventure is intended for experienced players with 3-5 player characters of 2nd-4th level (about 12 levels total). It includes combat and role-playing encounters and can be used in any medieval or early Renaissance setting. The setting requires an isolated port city. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, this adventure fits in well near the city of Murann in Amn. In the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting, the action could take place near Elredd on the Wild Coast.

This adventure makes use of spells and magical items from *Tome of Magic;* these are marked with an asterisk. If *TOM* is not available, the DM should substitute other spells and items.

Background

Forty years ago, Lucrezia the Wise, a fortuneteller of the city of Mirago, bore a son, an event celebrated with a day of feasting. The boy was strong and healthy; he was named Vincenzo and raised at his mother's side. Lucrezia predicted that her boy would honor the family as a priest of Njord, the water god of her northern homeland. A priest was summoned to serve as a tutor.

Lucrezia's predictions for her son have come true. Vincenzo is an honored and respected priest and patriarch of the city, known and loved for his short and amusing sermons, for stamping out heresy, and for his generosity and kindness to the city folk. His career has included opening sea routes, blessing the fishing fleet, quelling storms, and destroying monsters of the deep. His glowing reputation has grown and spread beyond the walls of the city of Mirago.

Lately, though, Vincenzo's reputation has declined. Four times in the past month he has been seen at the head of a gang of dwarven highwaymen robbing travelers, pilgrims, and merchants. He has even been placed among some vandals responsible for desecrating the Shrine of Birgit, the healing fire goddess. These are serious charges, but he denies them and claims that an imposter is at work. In the case of one robbery, he has a strong alibi, for some of

his close companions swear he was hunting with them that entire day. The truth is uncertain, and wild and conflicting rumors of witchcraft, sorcery, possession, and evil pacts are beginning to surface.

In fact, there *is* an impostor, a dim-witted man named Rodolpho who was adopted as an infant by a dwarven mercenary company. The dwarves found the baby abandoned outside their favorite inn and raised the foundling as their servant. Rodolpho has always accompanied them in the field and in their cavern retreat. By a remarkable coincidence, Rodolpho has many of the priest Vincenzo's features and mannerisms, though the dwarves never noticed this until lately.

Two months ago Muddlegrym, the leader of the dwarves, and his kinfolk heard a raspy, gasping voice coming from the darkness at the back of their hideout, where the main tunnel runs down to the sea caves. The mysterious visitor offered the dwarves power and wealth in exchange for their service. The penniless dwarves agreed. The visitor's first demand was to talk to Rodolpho. The dwarves handed the young man over without hesitation.

The voice belongs to Nagumanna, a sahuagin priestess of the shark god Sekolah (see DMGR4 *Monster Mythology,* page 93). Nagumanna has grand designs but needs helpers on the surface to carry them out. From the reports of sahuagin scouts, she learned that Vincenzo was the priest responsible for the loss of a sahuagin patrol and the death of one of their princes. Using her *reflecting pool* spell, she also discovered the remarkable physical similarity between Vincenzo and Rodolpho. The priestess began forming a plan.

Nagumanna is a mistress of disguise. With just a few artfully arranged changes, she hopes to replace Vincenzo with Rodolpho. Such a simpleton would make an excellent puppet, especially because she has used a *charm person or mammal* spell to make Rodolpho her friend. Unfortunately she hasn't yet figured out how to make the switch, though she has plans for communicating with Rodolpho magically. Nagumanna will be overjoyed if the PCs capture Rodolpho and take him back to the city. She will take this opportunity to send the dwarves to town with orders to make sure that the real Vincenzo dies.

If she fails at this replacement, Nagumanna has a back-up plan. She hopes that by implicating Vincenzo in vandalism and banditry, the water priest will be so completely disgraced that the ship captains and fisherfolk of Mirago will drive him out. Without Njord's blessings, the city's fleet will be easy prey for the sahuagin who live in the ocean trenches along Mirago's trade routes.

Nagumanna hopes to bring the sea-folk to power in Mirago. Though she is dreaming of a distant day, her plans are being set in motion now, and the PCs have stumbled across them while her efforts are still tentative. If the adventurers are successful, they may halt the entire operation before it gains momentum.

For the Player Characters

This adventure works best if the PCs hear rumors of Vincenzo's banditry in the marketplace or through a story told at an inn. Ideally, they learn about it at least one gaming session before this adventure. Even better, a trusted and honored NPC, someone they have known for a long time, can be substituted for Vincenzo.

This adventure can begin any time after the PCs have left Mirago and are on the road again. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You have just spent several days in the port city of Mirago, selling recent finds and renewing old acquaintances. You swapped tales in the dockside taverns with other adventurers, and you heard a dozen versions of the tale of Vincenzo, a heroic local priest of the water god who leads expeditions against evil sea creatures. Frankly, it didn't take long to get sick of hearing the townspeople praise Vincenzo's deeds, his golden hair, sea-blue eyes, and even his broken nose. Surprisingly, you also heard whispered rumors that he is the leader of a gang of dwarven bandits who prey on travelers.
>
> After a week of rest and recovery, you are ready for the road again, and saddle up at dawn. The first day is uneventful, but the morning of the second day is misty and chill. After just half an hour's ride you come across a slaughter in a small clearing. Three gypsies—two men and a woman—lie murdered in the dirt. One body is headless. A man's head is stuck on a pike set in the middle of the road, looking for all the world as if it were about to speak.
>
> As you stare at this grisly spectacle, a deep voice rings out: "Stand and deliver, or it'll be your head on the pike!" For a moment, it seems that the head spoke. Then a tall blond man steps forward from the trees.

If the PCs do not give up their valuables (the dwarves want only gold and jewelry, not weapons, armor, or magical items), the bandits attack. The blond man, however, does not join the fighting. If the PCs ask for more of a description, the DM should mention Rodolfo's blue eyes and broken nose.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The blond man in the woods is Rodolfo the imposter, and his resemblance to Vincenzo is amazing. He doesn't move from where he stands but looks after the horses while the dwarves yell threats from the safety of the trees.

Rodolfo: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT none; Dmg none; S 16, D 10, C 16, I 7, W 6, Ch 4; ML 6.

The real leader of the bandits isn't Rodolfo but rather Muddlegrym, a dwarven mercenary. Muddlegrym's company, the Hammer of the Iron House, has fallen on hard times in the last decade. Wars have been scarce, and he has had to stoop to robbing travelers. Impoverished as they are, the dwarves had little choice when Nagumanna offered them a cut of the sahuagin wealth. He isn't proud of it, but he isn't apologetic either. His shame makes him surly and prone to snap at PCs who try to reason with him. He warns the PCs that he has "a dozen men" with him in the woods.

Muddlegrym has thick red hair and wears a dark brown tunic and trousers over his studded leather armor. If the PCs resist, he fires his crossbow from the trees until someone tries to rush the undergrowth, then hurls his small ax and readies the big one.

Muddlegrym, dwarven leader: AL N; AC 5; MV 6; F5; hp 46; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 17, C 17, I 14, W 9, Ch 8; ML 14; XP 650; studded leather armor, heavy crossbow, *battle axe +1,* hand axe.

Muddlegrym's followers in banditry

are three of his cousins, red-haired dwarves with sharp features and ready crossbows. They are, if anything, even more bloodthirsty than their leader. Zenno, in particular, has a vicious streak. He kicks prisoners, slaps anyone they have captured, and takes ears as trophies from fallen foes.

All three dwarves wear ragged mercenary finery: shirts with puffed and slashed sleeves, black and blue ribbons in their beards, and large hats with feathers. They all use crossbows. In addition, Grymmaudle carries a halberd, and Zenno and Tuscard use bastard swords in the two-handed style.

Grymmaudle, Zenno, and **Tuscard,** dwarven bandits (3): AL LE; AC 5; MV 6; F1; hp 7, 4, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD camouflage; ML 13; XP 35; chain mail, light crossbows.

If the bandits capture the PCs, they strip them of their valuables and lower the adventurers down into the nearby caverns, where Nagumanna will take care of them (see below). If the PCs kill one or more of the dwarves, the rest flee.

The Caverns of Lugarno

The caverns of Lugarno are the current base of operations for the mercenary company (now bandit company) known as the Hammer of the Iron House. The caves begin in a small cliff, half a mile from the seashore; no ocean noise is apparent.

The upper levels are dry, though the limestone walls are slick and riddled with cracks and passages too narrow for humans to traverse. The caverns are festooned with stalactites, stalagmites, and odd calcite formations such as pools, curtains of rock, and lumpy mounds of stone.

1. Sinkhole. The entrance to the caverns is a sinkhole 30′ deep and over 10′ across. Here the dwarves have set up a wooden ladder with very closely spaced rungs. PCs over 4′ tall can use this ladder only with some difficulty. (Gnomes, halflings and dwarves climb up or down the ladder in half a round; others take a full round.) Ippolito, the dwarven lookout, sees anyone coming down the ladder and fires his crossbow at intruders. Targets gain no Dexterity or shield adjustment to armor class while on the ladder. PCs in the sinkhole or on the ladder are in point-blank range of Ippolito's crossbow (see *Player's Handbook,* page 52). Anyone returning fire must make a very difficult shot, because Ippolito has 75% cover, reducing his AC to −1.

Ippolito, dwarf: AL NE; AC −1 (6); MV 3; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18 (16 with crossbow); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA crossbow specialist; S 16, D 16, C 15, I 10, W 11, Ch 9; ML 12; XP 420; MC2; light crossbow, bastard sword, scale mail, helmet, three *bolts +2.*

Anyone coming down into the cavern must take on Blackie, a bear that the dwarves found in the woods after they slew its mother. Blackie was their mascot as a mercenary company, and has been their "watchdog." She attacks only those who threaten the dwarves, and she can be bribed with sweets or sweet-talked by a PC with the animal handling proficiency.

Blackie, bear: INT semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA hug; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175; MC1.

2. Entrance Cavern. The dwarves use this cavern as their headquarters. The floor is littered with bedrolls, unwashed iron pots and tin dishes, and spare whetstones, bowstrings, and boots. The banner of the company (a hammer on a red field) hangs from the ceiling.

Any bandits who escaped the ambush on the PCs are resting and recovering here along with Johann, their cowardly gnomish cook. If the PCs manage to overcome Ippolito and Blackie, Johann will gladly spill the beans, though he doesn't know much. He knows the dwarves reconnoitered the caverns a few years ago when they wanted to expand their quarters and perhaps even dig for coal again. They stayed out of the lower caverns because of the sea water below. ("Damn salt water will corrode good iron faster than you can spit.")

Johann lives in perpetual fear of the dwarves (and everyone else) and tells the PCs whatever he thinks they want to hear. He absolutely refuses to join the party if they want to explore the caverns beyond this one. However, he lays claim to one item that he is sure lies somewhere in the lower caverns: a large clock that belonged to his brother, Frederick, who was abducted two years ago by "a horrible, wet, squishy, clacky

thing." A crabman from area 8 took the clock under one arm and the gnome under the other. Neither ever returned.

Johann, gnome cook: AL N; AC 8; MV 6; T2; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (dagger, 1-4 hp); S 6, D 16, C 9, I 11, W 13, Ch 9; SZ S; ML 12; XP 65; knife, small helmet. Thief skills: PP 50; OL 20; FT 15; MS 45; HS 45; DN 25; CW 65; RL 0. Johann wears no armor, to make the best use of his thieving skills.

Johann has hidden his small cache of stolen items well. It can be reached only by climbing 20' up the wall to a tiny ledge. The gnome's hoard includes 100 sp, 40 gp, a 50-gp chip of jasper, three gold rings resembling snakes biting their own tails (worth 100 gp each), an intricate knot of silver wire worth 25 gp, seven mother-of-pearl buttons worth 20 gp each, and a white jade statuette of a cat worth 750 gp.

There is a 20' drop from this cavern's ledge to the next cavern down. Stairs lead down to area 3.

3. Cave Crickets. Pale yellow mushrooms sprout in this moist cavern. They thrive on the scraps and offal that Johann tosses down here. The mushrooms provide excellent food for group of harmless albino cave crickets that chirp constantly but are no threat to the PCs.

4. Alchemist's Lair. Over 200 years ago, a dwarven scholar and mystic named Walter Parafahrenheit lived here and sought the secrets of immortality and transformation. Just after he found the secrets he sought, he died of a stroke. His relatives buried him with honor and neglected his lab; no one was interested in his obscure tomes and smelly powders. To this day, no one has found his magic.

The cavern is now stacked full of dwarven spears, swords, daggers, helmets, and shields. They are slightly rusty and would fetch only 300 gp for the lot. There are also barrels of fresh water, pickles, and fine ale. Smoked fish hang from the ceiling, largely herring. Two 3'-diameter cheese wheels are stacked on the ale barrel; one cheese has been cut into. A *crucible of melting** is being used to store peppercorns.

Almost all of the open food and several of the alchemical powders have been nibbled by rats. Johann wages a constant war against the rodents, but he has never been able to kill the large gray rat he calls Slate, the rats' leader. Slate became a vapor rat from eating magical powders over the years, and he is intelligent enough to speak with visitors who can communicate with animals.

Slate, vapor rat: INT low; AL CN; AC 6 (or special); MV 12, fly 6 (gaseous 1); HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SD stinking cloud; SZ T; ML 7; XP 35; MC5.

Giant rats (3): INT semi; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD ½; hp 4, 2, 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SZ T; ML 5; XP 15; MC1.

In exchange for a month's rations and a promise to leave "his people" alone, Slate will fetch Parafahrenheit's treasures. The alchemist's treasury is stored in a 1'-high tunnel, inside a hollow book fitted with an unused lock. The hoard includes two potions of *longevity,* one application of *oil of preservation**, a *philosopher's egg**, and a *philosopher's stone.*

5. Pillars. A mass of stalagmites and stalactites meet in the middle of this chamber, forming a stony forest. The odor of rotten meat fills the air. The room is guarded by two giant lizards that Nagumanna raised and trained.

Giant lizards (2): INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 15; HD 3+1; hp 20, 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA double damage; SZ H (15' long); ML 10; XP 270.

The lizards attempt to push PCs down into the chimney (area 6), their food storage area. Anyone they bite for extra damage is deposited in the chimney the following round.

Fish and seal bones, large broken shells, and the skull and vertebrae of a dolphin all litter the cavern. PCs with the animal lore proficiency can identify this offal on a successful check. The bones are the lizards' leftovers.

6. Chimney. This 2'-wide shaft leads down at about an 80° angle. It is dry and offers plenty of handholds for climbing; experts can climb it by bracing themselves between the sides and scooting up first their feet, then their back. Anyone who fails a roll or is pushed in suffers 4d6 hp falling and scraping damage before becoming wedged into the shaft. Once wedged in, getting out requires a Dexterity check at a −4 penalty.

The shaft becomes increasing slick toward the bottom. The tang of salt water is in the air, and the walls are no longer covered with normal fungus.

The floor at the bottom is covered with tiny scavenging crabs that tug and snap at anything that isn't moving.

7. Curtain Cavern. Sheets of rock that has formed under cracks in the ceiling divide this room into two distinct areas. The dry, level area near the chimney is separated from the rest of the room by curtains of rock. When Nagumanna wants to instruct Rodolpho, freshen his disguise, or cast spells on him, she summons him to this chamber. The floor slopes down to the sea tunnel, and half the room is flooded.

The pit marked on the map is 10' deep and completely invisible from the surface. A giant clam attempts to grab a leg or arm of anyone who falls into the pit. Armored PCs will have trouble getting out of the pit; use the drowning rules on page 122 of the *PH.*

Giant clam: INT semi; AL N; AC 0; MV 1; HD 4+1; hp 24; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA grip for 2-12 hp damage each round; SZ M; ML 11; XP 420; new monster.

The giant clam contains a giant pearl worth 1,000 gp. To get it however, the animal must be pried open and then carved up, probably while it is still 10' underwater (it weighs over 900 lbs.). Opening the clam requires a successful Strength check at −5. Finding the pearl requires a Dexterity check at −3.

8. Hard Shells. This corridor slopes down to a sandy ledge inhabited by crabmen. A giant crab always watches the entryway. It quickly scuttles away to warn its keepers at the approach of intruders.

Giant crab (1): INT non; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 3; hp 24; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SD surprise; SZ L; ML 13; XP 65; MC2 (Crustacean, giant).

The ledge itself is covered with the crumbly pellets that crabmen excrete after straining the sand for nutrients. The pool connects to an underwater passageway that leads both to the ocean and to the great pool where Nagumanna lives (area 10).

The crabmen are neither friends nor allies of Nagumanna's. They don't care for her schemes, but they won't help the PCs out of the goodness of their crustacean hearts, either. If hired on as mercenaries, they will swim underwater to attack Nagumanna from below, swarming out of the great pool.

Crabmen (7): INT low to average; AL N; AC 4; MV 9, swim 6; HD 3; hp 21,

17, 14, 11 (×2), 7, 5; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SZ M-L (7'-10' tall); ML 12; XP 65; MC14.

The crabmen have a collection of 50 sp, 15 pp, Johann's mechanical copper and silver clock (worth 500 gp despite tarnish and water damage), and two 200-gp chunks of obsidian gathered from an underwater volcano.

9. Glowing Pools. These pools are filled with kelp, mildew, and half-decayed fungi. They give off a faint greenish-yellow glow. A large fish head is covered with white fungus that does not glow. The white fungus is a phycomid that guards the entrance to the great pool (area 10).

Phycomid: INT unratable; AL NE; AC 5; MV 3; HD 5; hp 23; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 3-6/3-6; SA infection; SD spell immunities; SZ T (2' diameter); ML 14; XP 975; MC1 (Fungus).

10. The Great Pool. This salt-water pool glows bright purple from luminescent algae brought here from the ocean depths. The floor around it is only a ledge. The pool expands to an enormous size underwater, a gigantic undersea cavern that quickly leads downward and then out to the sea. Barnacles, seaweed, and small animals encrust the walls of the cavern. The tide floods this cavern twice a day, though the DM should assume the PCs arrive at low tide the first time.

The pool is the lair of Nagumanna, a sahuagin with an unusually subtle mind for plans and intrigue. She is no less cruel and brutal than most sahuagin; she just thinks on a larger and more devious scale of cruelty. The high priestess of the sahuagin finds this approach unorthodox but intriguing. She has given Nagumanna permission to work freely, and the high priestess is awaiting word to begin plundering surface ships. Two male bodyguards accompany Nagumanna at all times.

Nagumanna (sahuagin): INT high; AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, swim 24; C7; hp 35; THAC0 16; #AT 5 or 3 or 1; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4/1-4/1-4 or by spell or weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 3,000; MC2; javelins, mace.

Spells: *call upon faith*, command, curse, cure light wounds (×2); aid, charm person or mammal, draw upon holy might*, hold person, silence 15' radius; dispel magic, squeaking floors*, strength of one*; protection from good 10' radius.*

Nagumanna has cast a *sacred guardian** spell on Rodolpho, so she is aware whenever he is in danger. She does not bother to warn Ippolito and Johann when the spell tells her that the bandits are in combat—they are just pawns. When the warning goes off, she casts a *squeaking floors** spell on area 9 to prevent being surprised. If the spell warns her of intruders, she casts a *strength of one** spell to increase her Strength and that of her bodyguards to 17, gaining +1 to damage on all melee attacks. Then she casts *protection from good, 10' radius,* raising the sahuagins' effective AC to 3 and improving their saving throws by 2. Finally, she casts a *draw upon holy might** spell before entering melee, to raise her Strength to 19, gaining +3 to attack and +7 to damage.

Saarasha and **Gundorsha** (sahuagin bodyguards): INT high; AL LE; AC 5 (3 under protection); MV 12, swim 24; HD 2+2; hp 11, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or special; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4/1-4/1-4 or by weapon type; SA Strength of 17; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC2.

While defending Nagumanna, these two sahuagin attempt to hurl their opponents into the pool for the shark to finish them off (see below). Saarasha wields a spear and a *dagger +2,* Gundorsha carries a trident, heavy crossbow, and dagger.

Saarsha's dagger is named Red Tide; the name is inlaid on the blade in magnesium letters. It is lawful neutral and intelligent, can *detect magic* within 10', and can cast weak illumination in a 20' radius. The dagger can grant its wielder *strength* once per day. It speaks Common, sahuagin, and the language of whales. Red Tide has an Intelligence of 15 and an Ego of 10. Saarasha gains +1 to hit and damage from Red Tide's *strength* effect, in addition to the +1 damage from Nagumanna's *strength of one* spell (see above).

Besides its magical abilities, Red Tide can lead to future adventures. It may know the location of sahuagin lairs, lost pirate hoards, or even the water elementalist mage who created it. When the PCs reach higher levels, they may discover that the dagger is tuned to vortices leading to the plane of elemental Water (see *Manual of the Planes,* page 22), leading to adventures against a prince of elemental evil.

Nagumanna keeps her treasures in a large tidal pool: three 500-gp black pearls, a bit of carved red coral worth 100 gp, and a gold necklace set with giant shark's teeth (her holy symbol). She also keeps seven enchanted poultices made from kelp and the magical blood of a deep-sea creature. These poultices act as *Keoghtom's ointment;* Nagumanna uses them to pass the phycomid (area 9) safely when she goes to feed the lizards (area 5).

If pressed in combat, Nagumanna flees into the pool and heads for the safety of the ocean astride her shark companion.

Shark: INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV swim 24; HD 5; hp 16; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; ML 10; XP 175; MC1.

The great pool connects to the bay of Mirago through many labyrinthine underwater passages too tedious to detail here. They could be expanded for truly daring adventurers to explore. Complete shrines of the sahuagin can be found there, guarded by giant manta rays, marine eels, sharks, and worse.

Leaving the Caverns

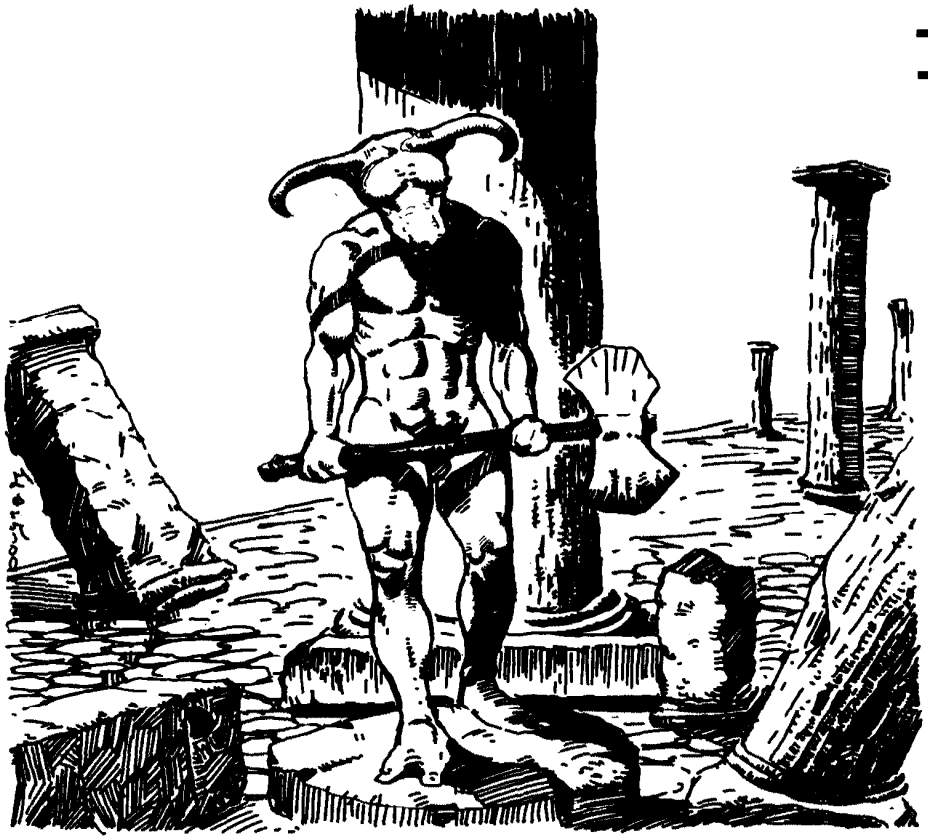
Leaving the caverns is easy; leaving them rich is hard. If any of the dwarven bandits escaped, they attempt to either ambush the PCs as they climb up the ladder, or they follow them, hoping to pilfer goods and animals when the PCs make camp.

If the PCs take the sea exit, they will have to contend with sahuagin harrying them underground and in the open ocean. Their chances of survival against a combined force of sharks and devil men are slim.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs succeed in killing or capturing Rodolfo, they have saved Vincenzo's reputation. Vincenzo gladly pays them a reward of 500 gp for removing the smirch on his honor, and he hires them for other missions on the city's behalf. He will also provide a young acolyte of Njord to serve the PC party as a follower or even as a henchman.

If Nagumanna survives, she seeks revenge on the PCs. Even if the dwarves are routed, the sahuagin will continue to work against the city of Mirago and its fleet. She has sahuagin allies waiting at sea to begin looting ships and taking slaves, and hill giants or other evil dwarves who could cut off the peninsula's overland route to the city. Ω



THE FOUNTAIN OF HEALTH

BY ANN DUPUIS

By the time you find it, you'll *need* it!

Artwork by Charles Dougherty

Ann has turned her love of role-playing games into a full-time career as a freelance writer. Her accomplishments to date include the GURPS® Old West *supplement for Steve Jackson Games and* PC4 Night Howlers *for TSR, Inc. (Anyone wanna be a werewolf?) She borrows a lot of adventure ideas from her husband, Paul, who is also her number-one playtester. This is Ann's second appearance in* DUNGEON® Adventures.

"The Fountain of Health" is dedicated to the memory of John W. Brown II (a.k.a. Rambling, the halfling hero with an attitude), who never got a chance to playtest this one.

"The Fountain of Health" is a D&D® adventure for 4-6 1st-level player characters (about 5 total levels). It may take place in any remote area where clerical healing is scarce due to isolation, recent death or indisposition of the local cleric, or other reasons. A sparsely settled area of the Principalities of Glantri, detailed in GAZ3 *The Principalities of Glantri,* would be ideal because local laws prohibit clerical magic. The party should include at least one thief and two fighters. The PCs should be Lawful (or at least good-hearted), as the primary motivation for the adventure is to save the life of a dying villager.

Some of the monsters encountered in this adventure are taken from the D&D *Rules Cyclopedia,* and page references are given for the *RC.* The statistics and important information for each monster are reprinted here, so you need only the *Rule Book* from the new D&D boxed set ("Black Box") for this adventure. Counters for these monsters are available in the *Haunted Tower* Adventure Pack. At the start of play, the Dungeon Master should write down the name, armor class, and hit-point total of each PC to help keep track of their injuries.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

This adventure takes place in the ruins of a temple built around a magical spring of healing waters. Dedicated to the Immortal Ariana (a little-known identity of the Immortal Alphatia), the temple was a hospice run by the clerical Order of the Golden Fountain. For 200 years, local people flocked to the temple to benefit from the healing powers of the magical spring. A single cup of the

water could heal wounds, cure disease, or heal the blind and the lame. It was even said the water could bring the dead to life—if the recipient was worthy.

More than a century ago, a warlord demanded that the Order of the Golden Fountain reserve their healing waters for his army. (If you sets this adventure in the Principalities of Glantri, this occurred in 861 AC, when all clerics were expelled from Glantri.) The Supreme Waterbearer, head of the clerical order, refused the warlord's order. The Gift of Ariana was not meant to be a tool for bloody warfare.

Enraged, the warlord tried to claim the spring for himself and sent an enchanted monster—a stone golem in the shape of a minotaur—to destroy the temple and all within it. The priests died as the creature knocked the temple down around them, but the Supreme Waterbearer laid a curse upon the healing waters with her dying breath: Until the warlord no longer coveted the Golden Fountain for his evil purposes, its waters would be poisonous to all.

The death of the warlord lifted the curse decades ago. Unfortunately, the return of the healing waters remained undiscovered. The few people who visited the temple ruins encountered dangers they could not overcome. Since the temple's destruction, various forms of wildlife have made the ruins their home. And the monster still remains, following its orders to destroy all intelligent life within the walls of the Temple of Ariana.

Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble

Before beginning play in this adventure, carefully open the staples at the center of the magazine, remove the large color map, and bend the staples back in place. Lay the map out flat and cover it with pieces of paper cut to the shape of each room or hall. As the PCs peer into or enter each room, remove the appropriate piece of paper. This way, the players cannot see areas of the temple map before their PCs explore them. If a PC climbs a wall or a nearby tree to get a look, remove all the papers except that covering the Inner Sanctum (area 22, which is hidden under a roof). When the PCs can no longer see the temple from above, replace the papers over those areas the party has not yet visited.

The Ruins: The walls of the temple are made of cut blocks of stone mortared together. The outer walls were originally 2′ thick. Inner walls are made of smaller stones and are roughly 1′ thick. Before the destruction of the temple, these walls stood about 20′ tall. They now stand only 8′ to 12′ high, with stone debris crumbled at their bases.

The temple's second story was demolished by the warlord's stone golem. The wooden floor and support beams, as well as the timber-and-thatch roof that once covered the temple, now block passages with fallen timber and blanket the floor as rotted debris. The main entrance and sanctuary (areas 1 and 2) did not have a second story; they were open to the roof.

If you wish to expand the adventure, parts of the second story may still be intact. Of course, exploring these areas should be dangerous. Many traps, pitfalls, and hungry scavengers lurk in the shadows.

Climbing the Walls: The heroes may attempt to climb the temple walls. You should discourage this, as PCs could conceivably avoid most of the dangers and obstacles in the adventure. Tell the PCs the walls look unstable and dangerous to clamber about on. If a PC tries anyway, mention that the debris piled at the base of the wall shifts alarmingly when stepped on. If the PC continues, have a stone suddenly loosen under his hand as he pulls himself up. If none of these warnings discourage the PC, roll percentile dice. If the climber is a thief, compare the result of the dice roll with the PC's Climb Walls ability. Nonthief adventurers have a 50% chance of climbing to the top of a wall without falling. If the roll is higher than the thief's ability (50% for nonthief adventurers), the PC falls, taking 1-3 hp damage.

If a PC climbs a wall or a nearby tree to gain an overview of the ruins, let the player see a glimpse of the map. (Cover area 22, which is hidden under a slate roof; see below.) Answer up to three of the player's questions about what the PC sees before the wall or branch the PC is standing on suddenly gives way. If the PC is a thief or halfling, the fall inflicts 1 hp damage. Otherwise, the PC suffers 2 hp damage from the fall. A successful Dexterity check on 1d20 reduces the damage by 1 hp.

Adventurers on top of a wall will meet either a collapsing wall or a wandering monster each turn they remain. Roll 1d4 and consult the following table to determine the danger encountered.

1. **Collapsing Wall.** PCs on the wall fall, taking 1-3 hp damage each. The collapse creates a 10′ wide gap in the wall, filled to a height of 4′ with stone rubble. (If the PCs are on a wall of the inner sanctum, ignore this result and roll again. See "The Inner Sanctum.") PCs may clamber over the debris, but this is dangerous. See "Rubble," below.
2. **Wobbly Stone.** One PC standing on the wall must make a Dexterity check on 1d20 or fall, taking 1-2 hp damage. Choose the party member affected (rolling randomly if desired) and the direction the PC falls.
3. **Robber Fly.** A robber fly attacks the party. See "Wandering Monsters."
4. **Stirges.** 1-4 stirges attack the party. See "Wandering Monsters."

Rubble: Many areas within the temple are heaped with rubble from the demolished walls and floor of the temple's second story (see map). This rubble is typically 3′ to 5′ high, and very dangerous to walk or climb on. Roll 1d6 for each PC who tries. On a roll of 1, the rubble shifts and traps the PC's leg, doing 1 hp damage and requiring one turn to free the PC. You can apply other results (the shifting causes the PC to fall, or brings more stones or timbers raining down from above, etc.) to vary the consequences of climbing over rubble. These results should not cause more than 1 hp damage or delay the party more than one turn, or both.

Two piles of rubble are especially dangerous (area 2, southeast corner and center of north wall). Any party member climbing on one of these heaps automatically causes the crushed stones to shift and slide, bringing some precariously balanced wooden timbers down as well. Even if the party just walks by the debris, the whole pile starts to slide on a roll of 1 on 1d6. Every PC within 20′ of the debris when it shifts must make a Dexterity check on 1d20 or take 2 hp damage. Adventurers hit by falling and sliding debris are trapped; it takes one turn to extricate them. Feel free to make other piles of rubble equally dangerous.

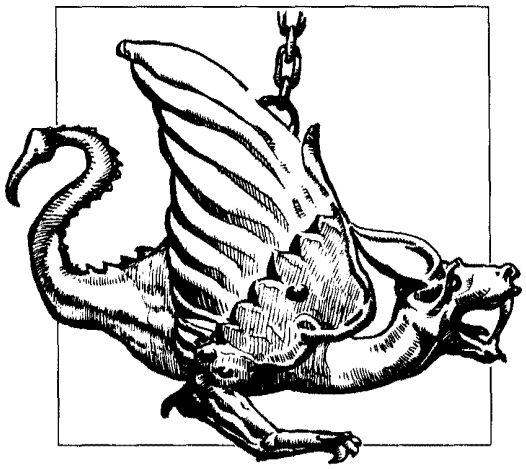
Doors: Most of the doors in the temple were wooden and now lie smashed or rotting in the doorways. PCs have no problems stepping over or on top of them. A few doors were made of stone and still remain more or less intact, including the main doors in area 1, the two concealed stone doors leading to

areas 8 and 19, and the great white marble doors leading to area 22.

The Inner Sanctum: This rectangular structure (area 22) was the original temple. The order built the rest of the building around it when they founded the hospital. The inner sanctum's walls are 3' thick, 12' tall, and made of smoothly polished black marble. The area has a flat slate roof, quite different from the wooden second story (now demolished) over the rest of the temple. The minotaur stone golem was unable to damage these walls, although it did batter the mortared stone walls that once extended up from the top of the inner sanctum's walls to the timber roof. Jagged remnants of these upper stone walls remain, standing 2' to 3' above the slate roof.

Light Sources: Most of the temple is open to the sky, so PCs won't need any light unless they go exploring at night. This will not be the case if you expand the adventure to include a partially ruined second story. The corners of rooms and any areas under collapsed timbers remain in shadow. Adventurers cannot see into these areas unless they shine a lantern or torch into the shadows. Standing in normal light negates infravision when attempting to peer into darkness. Any monsters hidden in shadows gain surprise on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6.

Weather: For simplicity, you may decide that it's a nice sunny day with no threat of rain or wind. But some interesting things can happen with weather. Strong gusts of wind may suddenly cause dried leaves and other debris to rustle and rise up in a small dust devil, startling the PCs. ("Suddenly, you hear crackling and see something moving out of the corner of your eye. Oh, never mind, it's just the wind kicking up some leaves.") In cold seasons, ice or snow may add to the dangers of the ruins. (Increase the chances of the PCs losing their footing or of walls collapsing.) Rain, too, can make the walls slick and slippery, and mire the heroes in muddy spots. Even a light drizzle can make PCs miserable, dampening all their gear and making torches hard to light. And even on a bright day, the sun may disappear behind a cloud at an ominous moment.



Wandering Monsters: Roll 1d6 every other turn. A roll of 1 means the PCs meet a wandering monster at the beginning of the next turn. If the PCs are badly injured (down to only 1 or 2 hp each), you should not introduce any wandering monster encounters, although you can still roll dice to keep the players on their toes.

Roll 1d6 and consult the following table to determine which monsters the PCs meet. None of these wandering monsters have treasure with them.

1. **Giant tiger beetle** (1): AC 3; HD 3+1; hp 10; MV 150'(50'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 16; Dmg 2d6; Save as F2; ML 9; INT 0; AL N; XP 50; Rule Book/39 or RC/160. Robber flies are their favorite food.

2. **Giant rats** (2-8): AC 7; HD ½; hp 3 each; MV 120'(40'), swimming 60'(20'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d3 + disease; Save as Normal Man; ML 8; INT 2; AL N; XP 5; Rule Book/50 or RC/201.

3. **Giant centipedes** (2-8): AC 9; HD ½; hp 2 each; MV 60'(20'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg poison; Save as Normal Man; ML 7; INT 0; AL N; XP 6; Rule Book/40 or RC/163.

4. **Stirges** (1-4): AC 7; HD 1*; hp 7, 5, 4, 3; MV 30'(10'), flying 180'(60'); #AT 1 beak; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d3 + 1d3 per round (sucking blood); Save as F2; ML 9; INT 1; AL N; XP 13; Rule Book/52 or RC/208.

5. **Bats** (10-40): AC 6; HD ¼*; hp 1 each; MV 9'(3'), flying 120'(40'); #AT confusion; THAC0 nil; Dmg nil; Save as Normal Man; ML 6; INT 2; AL N; XP 5; Rule Book/38 or RC/159.

The PCs have disturbed these normal bats in their roosts among the fallen timbers. The bats flap about erratically, doing no damage but causing much confusion. The PCs suffer a −2 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws, and they cannot cast spells while the bats are flying about. Roll for the bats' morale each round. The entire group flies off when it misses a morale check.

6. **Robber flies:** AC 6; HD 2; hp 10, 9, 8, 4; MV 90'(30'), flying 180'(60'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8; Save as F1; ML 8; INT 0; AL N; XP 20; RC/202.

A robber fly is a 3' long giant fly with black and yellow stripes. From a distance, a robber fly looks like a giant bee. The robber fly is a patient hunter, often hiding in shadows to surprise prey (1-4 on 1d6). A robber fly can leap up to 30' and attack with its bite.

The THAC0 statistics noted above can be used instead of the Monsters' Hit Table on page 37 of the D&D *Rule Book*. THAC0 stands for "To Hit Armor Class 0" and is simply the number the monster needs to roll to hit armor class 0. To use THAC0, you subtract the modified attack roll (the number you rolled on 1d20 plus any bonuses) from the THAC0, and the result is the armor class the monster hits. For example, the stone minotaur in area 2 has a THAC0 of 13. Its weapon is a *battle axe +1*. The DM rolls 1d20 for its attack, adds 1 (for the weapon's bonus), and subtracts the result from the minotaur's THAC0. A result of 17, for instance, is compared to the THAC0 like this: 13−(17+1)=−5. This is good enough to hit Armor Class −5 and will certainly hit a 1st-level PC!

If THAC0 involves too much figuring for your taste, use the Monsters' Hit Table instead.

Gargoyle Pendants: These holy symbols of the Order of the Golden Fountain are molded and engraved in the shape of an ugly, winged creature. These golden pendants are worth 100 gp apiece, but their real function is to protect their wearers from the gargoyle guarding the Fountain of Health. The gargoyle ignores anyone wearing one of these pendants in plain view (not obscured by clothing or armor). There are three gargoyle pendants hidden within the ruins of the temple, one each in areas 5, 14, and 20.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players and start the adventure at the entrance to the temple. If you wish, you may role-play the events leading up to the adventurers' arrival at the ruins,

including their stay in the village and their trek through the wilderness to the Temple of Ariana.

Your party is pretty new to the adventuring business. So far, you haven't visited many distant lands, rescued many princesses, battled many fearsome magical beasts, or done any of the hundreds of daring deeds you envisioned when you set off in search of adventure.

In fact, your latest "adventure" barely qualifies for the term. A merchant hired your party to deliver an important package to a blacksmith living in a distant village. Reports of bandits in the area had him worried that the package might not arrive without a strong party of experienced adventurers to transport and guard it. But you came all this way—through a forest reportedly teeming with ferocious beasts and cruel outlaws—without encountering anything more dangerous than a fox.

When you arrived at Wood's Hollow, the blacksmith, Hugh Grossman, was relieved to see you. The package you carried contained a potion of *healing* for his daughter, who had suffered grave wounds in a battle with orcs who had raided the village a week before. The village priest was slain in the fight, and Alise Grossman's injuries hadn't responded to normal treatment. Hugh hoped the potion would cure her.

But it failed. The orc who attacked Alise apparently had a poisoned blade, and the poison interfered with all attempts to heal the young woman. Bowing his careworn face in his hands, Hugh told you there was only one chance left for his daughter. A ruined temple, half a day's walk from Wood's Hollow, had once housed an order of healing clerics. There were tales of a golden fountain of miraculous waters that could cure anything—even death itself. If the tales were true, and someone could bring the healing waters to his daughter, Alise would be saved.

But there were dangers, Hugh went on. People stayed away from the ruins, fearful of the shadowy creatures and fearsome beasts that visitors had caught glimpses of. Four brave villagers had ventured to the ruins three days before, afraid the potion of *healing* would not arrive in time and hoping to save Alise with the fountain's waters. They had not yet returned; the other villagers were sure they had perished.

This is what you've been dreaming of! A chance to explore ancient ruins, brave unknown dangers, and save someone's life! While the villagers can't afford to pay you for this task, there may be untold treasures within the old temple. And who couldn't use an endless supply of healing waters?

Without further ado, you set off for the temple ruins. It wasn't far; only about seven miles from the village, along a rough and overgrown track. You arrived without incident and stand now at the main entrance to the once-fine temple. A quick circuit around the building showed it to be roughly 100′ × 150′. There is one other entrance, in the middle of the south wall. The surrounding forest has encroached upon the temple's clearing, and some small trees now grow within 30′ of the ruined walls. The temple's outer walls still stand to a height of 8′ to 12′, but the rubble and debris at their base attest to the fact they once were at least twice that height.

Your chance to make a name for yourself lies within those crumbled walls.

The Temple

Each of the following descriptions corresponds to an area of the Temple of Ariana marked on the map. When the PCs first enter each area, or look in through a doorway or around a corner, read the appropriate boxed text. This contains information the PCs can notice with just a quick look. The rest of an area's description contains information for the DM, including monster inhabitants, treasure, and other things of interest. Pass this information on to the players as the PCs discover it.

1. Main Entrance Hall.

This was once the main entrance to the temple's sanctuary. One stone door leans against a pile of rubble on the north side; the other lies flat and broken where it fell. The floor is littered with leaves and other debris.

Ahead, you can see the sanctuary's lovely marble columns lying in ruins. There doesn't appear to be anything of interest in the immediate area.

The debris on the floor includes many years' worth of rotting leaves, dust, dirt, and animal droppings, as well as small chunks of stone that were once part of the temple's walls. Beneath all this debris are beautiful marble tiles. If a PC carefully examines the floor (spending one turn in this room), he will find the recent prints of two pairs of booted feet. Adventurers who look into area 2 can see the top half of a stone statue of a bull-headed human.

2. Sanctuary.

This once-beautiful sanctuary is now a shambles. Marble columns that once marched down its sides lie strewn about the floor. Some of them crashed into the walls as they fell, and lie atop enormous piles of rubble.

Toward the far end of the room, in the center of the only clear area, stands a large stone statue of a bull-headed man. A mighty stone battle axe rests in its hands. Its head is bowed as though weary.

The PCs cannot to see the statue better until they go around or over the fallen columns. The columns were originally 4′ wide. Treat any attempt to climb over a fallen column as climbing over rubble (see "Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble").

When the PCs get within 20′ of the statue, they can see a human form lying at its feet. (This was one of the villagers who came in search of the fountain of healing.) When they are 10′ from the villager, the PCs can see he has a deep chest wound and is obviously dead. One hand clutches an old, broken sword; the sword point is on the floor a few feet away.

Any party member who gets within 5′ of the statue can see that the stone battle axe is not actually part of the statue itself; it has an ornately decorated wooden shaft. There is blood on the stone axe head. Just as the PC notices this, he also notices that the axe is swinging at him. Roll for surprise. The PC is now under attack!

Minotaur statue (lesser stone golem): AC 5; HD 6*; hp 8; MV 120′ (40′); #AT 1 axe; THAC0 13; Dmg 1d8+1; Save as

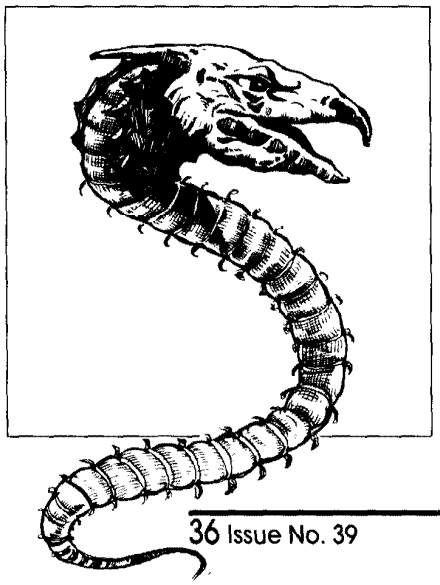
F6; ML 12; INT 4; AL N; XP 500; new monster (see Golem, RC/180).

The warlord sent this magical monster to destroy the Temple of Ariana. Although it succeeded, it has been badly damaged. Cracks now riddle its surface, and it has only 8 hp left. It still attacks as a 7-HD monster (because of its special bonus), so its attack rolls are three levels better than the "3+ to 4" line on the Monsters' Hit Table in the D&D *Rule Book* (page 37). It also wields a magical two-handed battle axe, which adds +1 to its attack and damage rolls. This is a dangerous monster—it can kill a hero with one blow!

But it's not invincible. Unlike normal golems, this minotaur statue is not immune to all normal weapons. PCs can harm it with any metal or stone weapons that smash rather than cut: maces, war hammers, and sling stones. Adventurers can even throw rocks at it, doing 1 hp damage each time a rock hits. If the minotaur chases the party, it has the same chance as they do of getting stuck or damaged when it goes over fallen columns or rubble (see "Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble").

As soon as the stone minotaur receives 8 or more hp damage, it stops in its tracks. The small cracks riddling its surface spread rapidly until it crumbles into a pile of rubble. Nothing but the stone head (encumbrance 500 cn) and the battle axe remain.

The battle axe is a magical two-handed weapon, +1 to hit and damage, +2 vs. stone monsters (gargoyles, stone golems, earth elementals, and the like). It also has a special power. On a natural attack roll of 20, it inflicts double damage on any stone monster, or destroys a 10′ × 10′ section of stone. (If you think this special power will cause problems in future adventures if the PCs take the axe, limit its use to 1-6 charges. After that, the axe loses its special power but retains its +1/+2 vs. stone monsters enchantment.)



The minotaur has no treasure. The dead villager has a pack with two days' standard rations (now spoiled), a wineskin with a quart of wine, and 30′ of rope. There is nothing else of value on the body, but the villagers of Woods' Hollow will wish to properly bury their neighbor and return even worthless possessions to the villager's kin.

Hidden behind one of the fallen columns in the northeast corner of the stone minotaur's room is a large nest of six **giant rats** (see "Wandering Monsters" for statistics). These rats attack any PC entering their corner or climbing over the rubble of the eastern wall. They will not venture out to attack PCs anywhere else in the sanctuary.

The nest is made of heaps of old rotting clothing, dead leaves and grasses, and other soft debris. Hidden in it are various items the rats have collected over the years. If the PCs search for one turn, they will find one gem and three pieces of jewelry: a large topaz (500 gp), a gold bracelet studded with tiny rubies (700 gp), a diamond necklace (1,100 gp), and an emerald pendant on a gold chain (1,300 gp). Searching for an additional turn reveals two more gems (a garnet worth 50 gp and a small pearl worth 100 gp), some miscellaneous coins (13 cp, 18 sp, 18 gp), and a rotting leather pack with a bone scroll case amid now-unidentifiable (and rather squishy) contents. The scroll case contains a piece of parchment with a well-worn love letter. The bone case is worth 10 gp; the parchment itself has little monetary value.

3. Infirmary.

This room is jumbled with thick wooden timbers that must once have been part of a roof or second story. A broken wooden stairway leads part way up the south wall, only to end in a pile of debris. It's difficult to tell what purpose this room had, although beneath the fallen timbers are vague shapes that may once have been tables or beds. Accumulated rocks, rotted wood, and other debris raise the level of the floor nearly 2′ above that of the sanctuary.

This was the hospital's infirmary, where clerics of the Order of the Golden Fountain tended the sick and injured. There are five **giant centipedes** (hp 4 (×2), 3, 1 (×2); see "Wandering Monsters" for complete statistics) concealed in the debris. As soon as a PC enters the room, roll for surprise. The three centipedes in the southern half of the room attack immediately; the other two join two rounds later.

Any PC bitten by a giant centipede must save vs. poison or become ill for 10 days (half movement speed, can perform no other physical actions). If the centipedes fail their morale check, they flee into the crevices in the debris, where the PCs can't get to them. They will venture back into the open one turn after the party leaves.

Once the centipedes are out of the way, the PCs can explore the room. There were originally 12 beds in here, arranged in two islands of six beds. If the PCs poke about among the fallen timbers and other debris, they will find scattered bones and two mostly intact skeletons, the remains of patients slaughtered in their beds by the minotaur golem. There is also a 1-in-6 chance that any PC poking about will move the wrong piece of wood, toppling timbers and debris onto everyone for 1-2 hp damage. Spending an entire turn searching the room reveals 12 cp, 5 sp, and 1 gp, coins that once belonged to the unfortunate patients.

The broken stairway will collapse under the weight of anyone trying to climb it, spilling the PC onto the floor for 1-4 hp damage. If the adventure has been expanded to include a second floor, this stairway is intact and leads upward with little blockage.

4. Hallway.

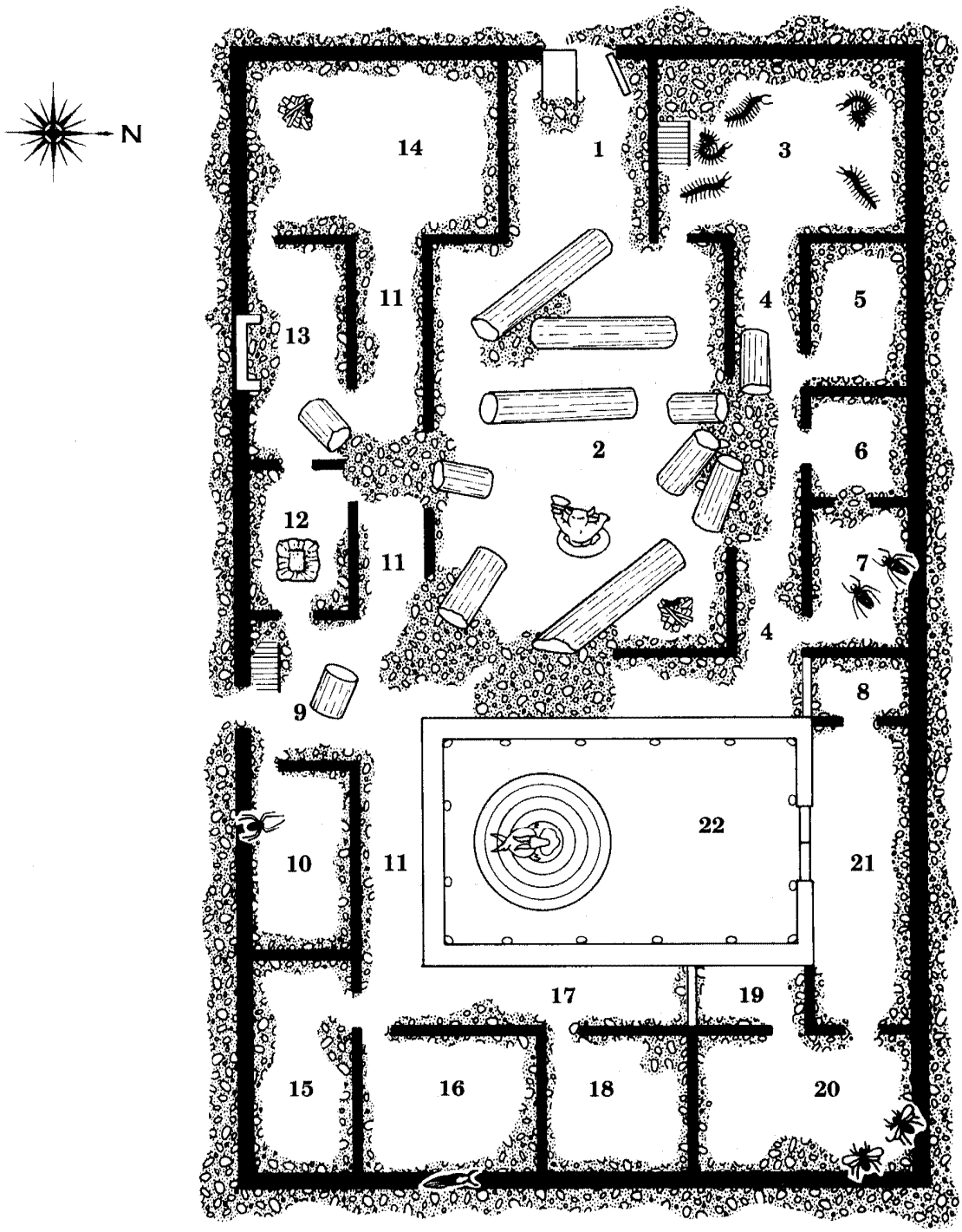
A pile of debris, including the broken top of a column from the sanctuary, partially blocks this hallway. Elsewhere, fallen timbers lean haphazardly against the walls or are wedged onto the top of the walls overhead. The debris makes walking down the hallway difficult.

The rubble in the middle of this hallway is particularly dangerous. PCs may start a rock slide simply by walking by (see "Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble").

As the PCs approach the eastern end of the hallway, they can hear horren-

THE FOUNTAIN OF HEALTH

1 square = 5′



dous buzzing and crunching noises: a battle between two giant tiger beetles and a robber fly (see area 7).

PCs at the eastern end of this hallway will notice that the wall surrounding the inner sanctum (area 22) is different from all the other walls. This wall is made of enormous blocks of black marble, and it seems to be undamaged, with almost no debris at its base.

The eastern end of the hallway's north wall has a concealed stone door leading into area 8. The concealed door's color and pattern of mortared stone is similar to the surrounding wall, so the door is not immediately noticeable. Any PC examining the wall automatically finds it. The door is hinged on the right and opens away from the hallway simply by pushing against its left side. This door is stuck, however, and requires a roll of 5 or 6 on 1d6 to open. (Remember to modify this by the PC's Strength score adjustment.) Each PC may try as many times as desired, but each attempt takes one turn.

A thief successfully examining the door for traps (rolling his Find Traps ability or less on percentile dice) will realize that the door is stuck due to rubble wedged near the top of the wall on the other side. Forcing the door open may cause this rubble to fall. A successful Remove Traps roll allows the thief to open the door without triggering the collapsing ceiling in area 8.

If the PCs try to break the door down with the minotaur's axe, it does 2 hp damage with every successful hit against AC 9. The door can take 20 hp damage before breaking apart. It shatters into rubble immediately if the player rolls a natural 20 to hit.

If the party goes south to the large pile of rubble between areas 2 and 22, they may climb onto the slate roof above area 22. Remember to check for rubble shifting beneath their feet, and for their chance to climb the wall without getting hurt (see "Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble").

5. Sick Room.

This room has the same jumble of debris and fallen timbers as the rest of the building. Part of the upper floor remained pretty much intact as its eastern half fell. The timbers and floor boards now form a sloping wall that blocks your view of the far corner of the room.

This was a private sick room, for patients who needed more than one dose of the fountain's healing waters. Behind the wooden floor (now a wall dividing the northwest corner from the rest of the room) is a bed. Although its wooden frame is partially rotted and riddled with termite holes, it's relatively intact. Lying on the bed is an old skeleton, still clothed in rotting clothing.

Another skeleton lies crushed beneath the eastern end of the fallen floor. Only its skull and right arm and hand are visible. The bony fingers clutch a gargoyle pendant (see "Gargoyle Pendants"). The skeleton was one of the temple's priests.

6. Sick Room.

The wall separating this room from the room to the east has a large gap, filled with debris.

There was nothing in this room for the minotaur to kill when it demolished the temple, though it wrecked a bed that now lies in flinders against the north wall. If the PCs have not yet fought the giant tiger beetles in area 7, they can hear them now and see one of them over the pile of debris in the gap in the wall.

7. Sick Room.

You see two large, tiger-striped beetles munching away on a giant bee. One of them turns its attention to you and races swiftly across the floor, clacking its mandibles the way a butcher might wield his knives!

Only one **giant tiger beetle** attacks (hp 9; see "Wandering Monsters" for complete statistics). The other beetle (hp 7) continues to eat the dead robber fly (the "giant bee" the PCs noticed) unless a PC gets within 5' of it. Then it, too, attacks.

The beetles were slightly injured in their battle with the robber fly, so they have fewer hit points than normal for monsters their size. They're still dangerous, however. One bite can easily kill a 1st-level PC. If you think the PCs will be badly beaten in this encounter, you may "fudge" the damage roll when a PC first gets bitten by a beetle. If the actual damage you roll would kill the PC, announce enough damage to leave the PC with 1 hp left instead. (For instance, if Thadeus the Cleric gets bitten for 7 hp damage, but has only 5 hp remaining, the DM may announce "Thadeus takes four hit points damage." Of course, you should make these rolls in secret.) This will give the PCs a chance to retreat and think up a better strategy.

After the battle, the PCs can examine the room more thoroughly. The first thing they notice is the half-eaten body of another villager. Next to the body is the carapace of a dead tiger beetle, killed by the villager's stout club.

If the adventurers search the room for one turn, they find a sack that appears to be empty. If a PC sticks his hand inside, he discovers the sack is actually a *bag of holding*. It contains a large gold buckle ornately carved in the shape of a dragon's head (100 gp) and a plain silver necklace (20 gp).

8. Secret Entrance Hallway.

This narrow room is nearly filled with debris and fallen timbers.

If the PCs enter this room through the concealed doorway, they walk into a trap. Pushing open the stuck door disturbs the rotted timbers wedged above (unless a thief has successfully removed the trap; see area 4). A portion of the second story's old floor falls on the first PC to walk through the concealed door, inflicting 1d6 hp damage and burying the PC (Dexterity check on 1d20 for half damage). It takes one turn to extricate the victim. If the PCs break the door down with the minotaur's axe, the rubble falls before they enter the room, doing no harm.

The entire room is filled with rubble and may trap others as well. Remember to check for injuries sustained by PCs crossing the rubble.

The concealed door cannot be opened from the north side unless the PCs spend one turn clearing the fallen timbers and other debris away from it.

9. Side Entrance Hall.

Just inside the doorway, a flight of stairs leads halfway up the wall to end in jagged, broken wood. Debris heaped beneath the stairs reaches nearly 5' high. More debris litters the floor and piles up against the base of the interior walls. In the center of the hall lies the broken top

of a once-beautiful marble column. Ahead, the corridor is completely blocked with stone rubble and debris.

The priests used this entrance to get to their quarters, and these stairs once led up to more rooms and storage areas. These areas still exist if the adventure has been expanded to include a partially intact second story.

A giant spitting spider watches the PCs through the doorway from its hiding place behind some debris in area 10. If the party enters its lair, the spider attacks immediately. Otherwise, it stalks the PCs as they leave area 9, attacking without warning from behind (surprise on 1-4 on 1d6) unless the players specifically state that one of their PCs is guarding the rear. See area 10 for the spider's statistics.

The rubble spilling over from the southeastern corner of the main sanctuary (area 2) is particularly dangerous (see "Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble").

10. Dormitory.

This room is filled with a jumble of fallen timbers, crushed rock, and rotted floorboards from the temple's demolished second story. Piles of wood that may once have been bunk beds line what's left of the walls. The jumble of debris makes it difficult to make out many details. It also offers plenty of hiding places for small scurrying things—or perhaps even large scurrying things.

If the PCs haven't already dealt with the giant spitting spider (it may have stalked them in area 9), the spider spits at the first PC through the door. Roll for surprise for the PCs. If they're surprised, the leading PC does not get a saving throw to avoid the web.

Giant spitting spider: AC 7; HD 2+1*; hp 11; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 spit or bite; THAC0 17; Dmg poisonous web or 1d8; Save as F1; ML 7; INT 0; AL N; XP 35; new monster.

This 5'-long giant spider is yellow with black spots, and spits a poisonous web for its main attack. The web has a range of 10' and completely encases any target it hits, gluing it to the floor and to any object within 3'. The spider does not need an attack roll to spray its web accurately. The victim gets a Dexterity check on 1d20 to avoid the web, but only if he's not surprised by the attack. Any PC caught in the web must save vs. poison or become paralyzed. If the saving throw is successful, the PC can break free of the web in 2-8 turns. The spider can spit only once every 10 rounds. It uses its bite attack in any round it can't spit.

This spider follows the PCs through the ruins, attacking from behind when the PCs least expect it, unless the PCs dispatch it.

If the PCs kill the spider, they may examine its body. The spider has six pearl-white eyes and a tough fluid-filled sac suspended from its thorax, just behind its jaws. If the PCs carefully remove the sac and the jaw, they can use it to "spit" more poisonous web. This involves holding the sac between the PC's torso and one arm, aiming the jaw with both hands, and squeezing sharply on the sac. The player must roll as if his PC were using a missile weapon. The sac contains enough fluid for three complete web-spits.

Party members examining the spider's lair find a fairly fresh web-covered bundle in the northeast corner of the room. The bundle contains Joseph Bauer, one of the villagers who ventured into the temple four days ago. He's alive, but just barely (1 hp). Unconscious, poisoned, and paralyzed, he cannot recover without magical help. Award the party 200 XP if they manage to return Joseph to the village alive. Finding the healing waters of the Fountain of Health could help Joseph tremendously.

Searching the lair for one turn uncovers the remains of other victims, both human and animal. The party members also find 23 sp and 6 gp.

11. Main Hallway.

This hallway once ran the length of the temple. Now, much of it is choked with debris. At one point, the hallway is entirely blocked by fallen stones and wooden timbers piled 5' high.

Any PCs in the eastern end of this hallway will notice that the wall surrounding the inner sanctum (area 22) is different from all the other walls. It's made of enormous blocks of black marble, and it doesn't seem to be damaged. There's much less debris at its base, as well.

The rubble spilling over from the southeast corner of area 2 is actually a trap of sorts, and may turn into a rock slide at any moment (see "Monsters, Ruins, and Rubble").

If the PCs make it past the rock slide to the large pile of rubble between areas 2 and 22, they may climb onto the slate roof above area 22. Remember to check for rubble shifting beneath their feet, and for their chance to climb the wall without getting hurt. See the description of area 22.

Adventurers climbing over other rubble in this hallway have the normal chances of getting hurt.

12. Pantry.

> Wooden shelves that once lined this room now add to the general mess of rotten wood and other debris littering the floor. There doesn't seem to be anything of interest here.

This was once a pantry with a trapdoor entrance to the root cellar below. Now the dangerous hole is covered with debris. The first PC to step on the indicated area must make a Dexterity check on 1d20 or fall into a pit trap, taking 1d4 hp damage and becoming partially buried under the heaps of debris that follow him in. It takes two turns to get the PC out.

The fallen PC has a 50% chance of landing squarely on a small locked chest. This iron chest contains the cook's supply fund: 600 gp and a piece of parchment bearing a shopping list. The chest can also be discovered by climbing down into the root cellar and searching through the debris and rubble for one turn.

If a thief successfully makes a Find Traps check, this trap can be avoided. It cannot easily be removed. If the PCs haven't yet dealt with the spitting spider (see area 10), it will take this opportunity to attack.

13. Kitchen.

> This room contains the top half of a column that fell over the north wall of the main hallway. The south wall has an enormous fireplace, partially hidden behind a mound of demolished chimney bricks. There seems to be little else of interest here.

This was the temple kitchen, where the cook prepared food for all the clerics of the order and their patients. PCs investigating the fireplace find nothing but soot (which promptly covers them from head to toe) and an iron cauldron (encumbrance 900 cn).

14. Dining Hall.

> This large room was once a dining area. Large wooden tables and long benches can still be seen beneath the boards and timbers of the collapsed upper floor. You hear a squeal as something charges toward you from the southwest corner of the room.

Roll to see if the PCs are surprised. The party has stumbled into the territory of six **giant rats** (see "Wandering Monsters" for statistics) who are now defending their nest in the southwest corner of the room.

The nest is made of heaps of old rotting tablecloths, dead leaves and grasses, and other soft debris. Hidden in it are various items the rats have collected over the years. If the PCs search for one turn, they will find four gems: a turquoise (10 gp), a piece of amber (100 gp), a second piece of amber with a tiny flower preserved inside (500 gp), and a finely cut onyx (75 gp). There's also an incomplete collection of silverware (three forks, two knives, and seven spoons, worth 50 gp) and a gargoyle pendant (see "Gargoyle Pendants").

15. Dormitory.

> Smashed and half-buried bunk beds line the perimeter of this room. You notice something metallic poking out of the pile of rubble by the door.

A small chest that once belonged to a temple cleric has survived a recent fall of some heavy stones. The chest is not locked, but a big dent has stuck the top closed. If a PC tries to open the chest, have the player roll 1d6 as though opening a stuck door. Add any Strength modifiers to the roll. On a roll of 5 or 6, the PC opens the chest. It contains 27 sp and a leather-bound book wrapped in velvet. The book is a first-aid manual carefully illustrated with many drawings of common injuries and their treatments. It would be very valuable to any physician or healer (250 gp).

The only other thing of interest in this room is a nest of normal rats in the northeast corner. If the PCs approach within 10′ of their lair, the rats flee into the cracks and crevices; a few even run up and over the outside wall.

16. Dormitory.

> This room was evidently a dormitory, as broken bunks line the walls. Its most interesting feature, however, is the very large snake basking in the sun on the top of the east wall.

This 6′-long giant racer snake remains on the wall unless it feels threatened. If the PCs approach within 10′, check morale for the snake. On a roll of 7 or less on 2d6, it attacks; otherwise, it slithers down the outside of the wall.

Giant racer snake: AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; MV 120′(40′); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 17; Dmg 1d8; Save as F1; ML 7; INT 2; AL N; XP 20; Rule Book/51 or RC/204.

The snake has no treasure, and there is nothing else of interest in the room.

17. Hall. This hall leads north to a dead end. PCs walking along the hall see that the west wall is a continuation of the black marble wall they saw in the main hall (area 11).

The northern end of the hallway has a concealed stone door leading into area 19. The door is the same color and pattern of mortared stone as the surrounding wall, so it's not immediately noticeable. Any PC examining the wall automatically finds the door (no secret door roll required). It's hinged on the left, and opens away from the hallway simply by pushing against its right side. Rubble on the other side partially blocks the door, however, requiring a roll on 1d6. On a 5 or 6 (modified by any Strength adjustment), the PC shoves the debris out of the way. Each party member may try as many times as desired, but each attempt takes one turn.

18. Supreme Waterbearer's Quarters.

> This room contains a jumble of broken and rotted floor boards and timbers, just like much of the rest of the temple. There doesn't seem to be anything moving in here.

If the PCs search through the rubble and debris, they can find parts of a large bed, a wooden dresser (its smashed drawers still contain bits of frayed and rotted cloth), a chair leg, and a few broken personal items. The only thing of value here is a silver comb (5 gp).

19. Secret Entrance Room.

> This room is almost entirely filled with rubble and debris; it may be difficult to get to the other door.

Check for each PC's chance of getting trapped or injured by the rubble.

20. Vestment Room.

> This large room still has a partially intact ceiling over much of the northeast corner. You hear an ominous buzzing sound from the shadows.

Two **robber flies** (hp 10 each; see "Wandering Monsters" for complete statistics) are lurking in the shadows here, so roll for surprise for both the PCs and the monsters. The robber flies will attack the PCs. They're hungry, and a good meal just walked into their lair!

Robber flies can easily kill a 1st-level PC with one bite. If you think the PCs will be badly beaten in this encounter, you may adjust the damage roll when a PC first gets bitten by a robber fly (see the tiger beetle example in area 7).

True to their names, these robber flies have mindlessly collected some shiny objects. Scattered about their lair are 50 sp, some smoothly polished pebbles, and a gargoyle pendant (see "Gargoyle Pendants").

Hanging in shreds against the east wall, partially protected by the sagging floor above, are three long robes of cloth-of-gold. They are badly chewed and torn, and no longer have any monetary value. The hooks they hang on are made of gold-plated brass (worth 2 gp apiece).

21. Antechamber.

> The first thing you notice in this large area is the body of a woman, lying as though she fell while running across the room. The next thing you notice is a second body, now nothing more than a skeleton, stretched out in front of two huge doors made of white marble.

The woman was one of the villagers. Though strongly muscled, she was unable to overcome the gargoyle in the inner sanctum (see area 22). The monster mortally wounded her, but she managed to run out into the antechamber before collapsing. Terrible claw and fang marks scar her face and back. The waterskin clutched in her left hand is uncapped and empty. Her right hand grasps a battered sword, its once-fine blade dented and dulled.

The ancient bones are all that is left of the Supreme Waterbearer, who died defending the entrance to the inner sanctum. A battered and rusted mace lies beneath the remains.

The doors to the inner sanctum (area 22) are fastened with golden hinges and have huge, solid-gold handles on them. They swing outward, into area 21. If left to themselves, they slowly swing shut again in six rounds.

22. Inner Sanctum. The sanctum's flat slate roof is still intact and entirely covers the room. The sanctum once had mortared stone walls extending up to the timber and thatch roof of the temple, creating a sort of attic above the slate roof. The bottom few rows of stones still stand on top of one another. The upper portions of the walls have collapsed onto the roof, along with timbers and long-decayed thatching material.

If the PCs climb onto the slate roof of the inner sanctum, they're attacked by 1-4 **stirges** (see "Wandering Monsters" for statistics). After that, the roof is fairly safe to walk around on. You may plague the party with more stirges or a robber fly if you like, or have them check for injuries caused by shifting rubble, but they should first get a turn or two of peace.

There are plenty of secure, protruding stones the PCs can tie ropes to if they wish to climb down into surrounding areas.

When the PCs first enter the inner sanctum itself, through the white marble doors, read the following description.

> You can't see much of the interior of this structure. The sunlight shining through the doorway doesn't carry very far. The walls to either side of the entry seem to be made of smoothly polished black marble, with the glint of a golden candle sconce here and there. The floor is made of square gray tiles. Though the room is a bit dusty, there's no rubble or debris in sight.

The party must provide illumination—torches, lanterns, or the candles in the

sconces—before they can see the southern half of the room very well. Once the heroes are close enough to see the southern end (remember, torch and lantern light carries only 30'), read or paraphrase the following.

> Before you, an ornate golden fountain, rises from the center of a circle of marble steps leading down to a pool at its base. A hideous creature carved from black marble squats atop the far side of the fountain's basin. Its horned head juts out between shoulders that sprout batlike wings, while the creature's clawed hands and feet grip the golden rim. Although the statue's mouth gapes open as though to spew forth the fountain's waters, the pool is nearly empty.

The ugly statue is actually a gargoyle (an enchanted monster much like the stone minotaur in area 2), placed here centuries ago as the fountain's guardian. It remains perfectly still (like a statue) until a PC descends the first step leading to the pool. Unless the PC is wearing the holy symbol of the Order of the Golden Fountain (a gargoyle pendant), the gargoyle leaps to the attack, gaining surprise on 1-4 on 1d6. Once awakened this way, the gargoyle attacks everyone within the room. Only PCs visibly wearing a gargoyle pendant are not attacked.

Gargoyle: AC 5; HD 4**; hp 16; MV 90'(30'), flying 120'(40'); #AT 2 claws/1 bite/1 horn; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; Save as F8; ML 11; INT 5; AL C; XP 175; Rule Book/43 or RC/178.

With four attacks per round, this is a nasty creature to fight! It can't fly at top speed in this confined area, but it's still formidable. The gargoyle is immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, and cannot be harmed by normal weapons.

The PCs should have at least one of the following items to use against the gargoyle: the minotaur's magical stone battle axe, the web sac from the spitting spider, or a gargoyle pendant (the golden holy symbol of the Order of the Fountain). If they don't have any of these, and they have no magical weapons or combat spells of their own, their best bet is to flee!

The magical axe is very effective against the gargoyle, especially with its +2 bonus vs. stone monsters and its special power. If the PCs use the web sac successfully, the gargoyle will become entangled in the web and glued to the floor for 1-4 turns. After that, it breaks free and continues to attack any PCs within the room (except those visibly wearing a gargoyle pendant).

At first glance, the fountain looks as though water should spew from the gargoyle's mouth into the fountain's basin, and from there spill over into the pool at the bottom of the circular steps. In fact, the healing waters seep up from the ground beneath. When the Order of the Golden Fountain was at its height, the natural spring would fill the pool with up to 30 doses of healing water every day. Now, however, the pool at the base of the fountain contains only enough healing water for 10 doses. The PCs undoubtedly have some injured party members—perhaps even dead ones—and they may be escorting a very bedraggled Joseph Bauer (see area 10).

One dose of the healing waters will do *one* of the following: bring a person back to life, neutralize poison, heal 1d6 + 1 hp damage, *cure disease*, remove paralysis. Patients suffering from multiple effects may take multiple doses; each dose provides a cure for one of the previous effects in the order indicated. A patient can benefit from a specific type of healing only once in any 24-hour period. Joseph Bauer, for example, can benefit from up to three doses of the healing waters. The first dose neutralizes the poison; the second restores 1d6 + 1 hp damage; the third removes his paralysis. Further doses taken within 24 hours have no effect. If he had suffered from two types of poison, only one could be cured the first day.

The healing waters can restore a person to life only if death occurred within 24 hours (it will not work on any of the dead villagers found in the temple). It also cannot heal anyone who has suffered 10 or more hp damage beyond 0 hp. PCs restored to life awaken with only 1 hp and must complete their healing through rest; magical spells and potions (even the healing waters of the Fountain of Health) will not restore any more hit points.

The only treasures in the inner sanctum—other than the healing waters, of course—are the golden candle sconces set in the walls. There are 16 of them, spaced every 10'. Each is worth 50 gp if pried out of the wall.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs manage to get the healing waters, the way out of the temple should be fairly safe. They may meet some of the remaining monsters or a wandering monster. The PCs should *not* take the time to explore areas they haven't visited, unless they suspect one of the villagers may still be alive. After all, the blacksmith's daughter may die if they don't return immediately. Of course, the PCs can come back to the temple later if they wish, to do any further exploration or cleaning up.

Award the PCs 1,000 XP for getting the healing waters and saving at least one dose for Alise. Award another 800 XP if they left the golden candle sconces on the walls in the inner sanctum, out of respect for the lost Order of the Golden Fountain. Returning the bodies of the dead villagers to Wood's Hollow earns 300 XP; rescuing Joseph and seeing him home earns another 500 XP.

If the PCs suggest re-establishing the Temple of Ariana and its hospital to the villagers, reward them with another 1,000 XP. They're not likely to stay to do the work themselves (after all, they're important adventurers now, with other tasks to attend to), but if they stay for a week while the villagers feast and celebrate, making much of the heroes, they can depart with three doses of healing water collected from the fountain by villagers.

The Golden Fountain of Ariana will yield five healing doses each week. The PCs can draw on this source for as long as they're in the area. If the PCs abuse this privilege, the villagers regretfully inform the party that there is now too much demand for the healing waters for them to take any without recompense (500 gp per dose, or volunteering for a difficult and dangerous task on behalf of the village or the temple). If the temple is rebuilt and rededicated to the Immortal Ariana, the clerics of the new Order of the Golden Fountain will be able to coax 25 doses out of the fountain each week, but the demand for the healing powers of the fountain will grow as well. The PCs can never receive more than three doses at a time. Ω

THE FIRE GIANT'S DAUGHTER

BY WOLFGANG BAUR

A teenaged giant can rune your day.

Artwork by Bob Klasnich

Wolfgang's recent projects include MC 13, the AL-QADIM™ appendix, and Assassin Mountain, *an adventure sourcebox for the Land of Fate setting. This adventure was accepted over a year ago, and playtested two years ago (thanks, Steve).*

This AD&D® adventure is intended for a party of 2-4 player characters of levels 8-10, a total of about 26 levels, although less-powerful parties willing to avoid combat might also succeed. It is set in the mythic portion of Europe described in the *Vikings Campaign Sourcebook* but can readily be adapted to other settings. The adventure requires powerful warriors or less-powerful rogues. Some of the spells listed are from the *Tome of Magic* (these are designated with an asterisk), but others may easily be substituted. The adventure takes place in winter.

For the Player Characters

Winter in Isaland (Iceland) is usually long, hard, and very dull. Drinking, singing, dancing, and good cooking keep boredom away at night. Sewing, sharpening tools, caulking ships, repairing nets, and woodcarving all take their time during the days. But too many weeks of togetherness in a longhouse can drive men, women, and children to pettiness, jealousy, and bored malice. For this reason, households gather at an *althing*, a sort of Viking parliament and county fair, just as often in the winter as in the summer. A meeting like the althing gives everyone a chance to meet neighbors, gossip, settle disputes, trade gifts and goods, hear new voices, and see unfamiliar faces.

At the most recent winter althing, your party hears the tales, songs, sagas, and *kennings* of Fjori, a skald from the distant Volga Bulgars who has been traveling Isaland since fall. His most interesting tale concerns the night he went to visit Isaland's geysers by moonlight, the better to admire the white waters. As he stood near the steaming streams and watched the eruption of the hot springs, he noticed a *svipa*, a ghost, walking unharmed among the scalding waters. The svipa was entirely clothed in shimmering white, with white hair and black skin, and it was female. He claims that she carried a sword shining like a valkyrie's, and that she stood at

least 12' tall.

Afraid of being noticed by such a spirit, Fjori tried to creep away, but this cowardice failed. The svipa turned and summoned him to her by enchantment. He felt paralyzed but tore free and fled at the last moment. The svipa laughed at him. Fjori warns others that the svipa will steal the soul of anyone she catches, but some warriors seem to think the svipa let him go because he was beneath her notice. On the other hand, none of them boasts of going to the hot springs anytime soon.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The landscapes of Isaland and Muspelheim are meant to be larger than life, epic in the style of the great sagas. Don't be afraid to go over the top in your descriptions. In particular, the giants of the Norse are unlike the descriptions given in the *Monstrous Compendium*. The statistics below reflect this.

Fjori's tale is obviously embellished, but most of it is no more than the truth. For more elaborate details of a svipa, see page 49 of the *Vikings Campaign Sourcebook* (*VCS*). If the PCs aren't motivated to investigate because of curiosity, they should probably retire from the adventuring life and take up fishing or trapping.

If a PC boasts broadly (or drunkenly) and offers generous rewards for those willing to accompany him, a follower with potential to become a henchman might join the party at this point (if the DM™ wishes). Details of such an encounter are left to the DM's discretion. Fjori will not accompany the party back to the geysers under any circumstances.

Chase Across the Snows

In winter, the 10-mile trip inland to the geysers could be quite an adventure if the PCs don't plan it carefully. The geysers' exact location depends on the DM's preference, but Isaland is riddled with hot springs. If the PCs make it to the geysers, they encounter the "svipa" during their first day there. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The geysers are spectacular, but the ice-rimmed pools of boiling water are almost as beautiful, and their warmth is welcome after days in the cold. You have spent several hours in the area when you notice a dark giantess not far away, dressed in a shining white tunic, white breeches, gray cloak, and dark boots. She seems to be sculpting small lines in the snow with an icicle.

The figure seen by the bard was no ghost but was certainly not normal. The "svipa" is Ingrid, a fire giant's daughter and a priestess of Brigit, the fire goddess. Her status as a priestess gives her access to several runes, namely the *catch-rune, limb-rune, quench-rune,* and a *follow-rune* (new, see sidebar), which she is currently inscribing for use on the PCs. She uses both a giant-sized *broad sword +2* and a bow and arrow. She wears white wolfskin clothes stitched with silver and gold, a gift from her doting father. The entire costume is worth 20 marks or 320 gp.

Ingrid: INT very; AL LN; AC 3; MV 24; HD 15+2; hp 95; THAC0 5; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 4d4+10 or 2d6; SZ G (10'); ML 16; MC1 (Giant, fire, modified).

Ingrid owns a pair of giant-sized *boots of speed* that allows her to outrun any horse, land-based or flying. She can and has outraced valkyries on their steeds, though she has not yet dared to match herself against Odin and his eight-legged steed, Sleipnir. The dark reindeer-skin boots allow her a movement rate of 24 when not racing horses.

Under the Scales of the World-Serpent

If no PC fails a save against Ingrid's *follow-rune* and none of them elect to follow the giantess, the adventure is over and some other group of Vikings will return to the steading with a midwinter's tale of giants, runes, and heroic deeds. The PCs' names are thoroughly blemished by spring, and their standing drops several notches.

If at least one PC fails a saving throw or voluntarily follows the fire giantess, describe the adventurer's increasing speed (see sidebar) and rapid departure from the vicinity. Then ask for more volunteers. To avoid splitting the party unnecessarily, assume the rune magic envelops those who hesitate as well as those who rush off when the giantess first beckons. Those who still want to remain and watch their companions race to the horizon are left behind, barring other magical means of travel.

For those of the party who are following Ingrid, read or paraphrase the following:

> The svipa's rune magic has pushed everything out of your mind except the need to follow her as swiftly as possible. Some of you hardly noticed the command at first, but when you followed your companions you felt it, too. Chasing the beckoning giantess has made you lose track of time. The cold air burns your throat, and the lack of food, water, and rest makes your muscles ache.
>
> Every time you feel about to collapse, the giantess stops, laughs, and urges you on in a mocking voice. As the sky darkens and sunset approaches, you stop to rest at the edge of a small grove of stunted trees. Within the grove you see small hills; a cave splits one of the more distant hills, almost like a cat's pupil. You don't realize that you have arrived until the giantess turns and speaks to you:
>
> "You are strong travelers. Visit the cave in the woods and convince my father to let me leave his hearth and not return. He has bound me with rune magic that always summons me back to the hearth, just as my mother is bound to it. If you can find the rune and destroy it, or if you can each challenge and defeat my father and brothers in contests of wit and skill, then I will be freed. If you succeed and take me with you, I will reward you well. If you can't free me, you will have to make your way back across the snows without my help."

Ingrid then runs into the cave, leaving the exhausted PCs behind. The cave is carved out of the clay under one of many small curving hills that slope up gently in the east and then drop off sharply in the west. These are know as the Scales of the World-Serpent, though they can be mundane hills if the DM prefers a more realistic and less epic fantasy campaign. Otherwise, the site is literally at the end of the world—the Midgard serpent.

The giant's cave is guarded by two ferocious hell hounds, family pets that sniff out most intruders. They bark as soon as they smell anything (including *invisible* creatures) or when they see any movement. They bark loudly for one round before attacking.

Ashes and **Cinderbiter** (hell hounds):

INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 7; hp 50, 30; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA breathe fire; SD immune to fire, see *invisible*; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975 each; MC2.

The barking of the hounds brings out Rockdog within a round; if the PCs are already in combat with the hounds, he calls them off and questions the PCs. If they attack him as well, he shouts for help, and within two rounds the PCs will be facing a full assault from the fire giant family, including Bestla but not Ingrid.

Rockdog serves as the family retainer, cook, and scapegoat. He is originally from Sweden, and his features are those of a Swedish troll: humanlike, but deformed, flatfooted, and ogrish. He cannot regenerate. He uses his huge fists to hammer anything he feels he can bully (usually the dogs, when no one is looking). If the hounds can't hold the PCs off, he flees combat to warn the family inside the cave.

Rockdog (troll): INT low; AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/1-8; SZ L; ML 10; XP 420; MC1 (modified).

Deep inside the hill, Ingrid's mother Bestla sits quietly by the fire, minding her own business. Her husband has ignored her for years, her sons are distantly respectful, and only her daughter pays much attention. She avoids trouble with the PCs, and she will take them into her confidence only if they show her the respect and sympathy she feels are her due.

Bestla: INT high; AL LN; AC 5; MV 15; HD 15+5; hp 115; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+10; SZ G (15'); ML 14; MC1.

Small and stooped by giant standards, Bestla can still swing a cane with a fury that keeps the dogs in the opposite corner. She will wield it only to defend herself or her daughter. She was once as magically rune bound as Ingrid is now, but she has long since resigned herself to living under her husband's fist and has learned to manipulate him to her advantage. She is verbally protective of her husband, since without him her callous sons might turn her out of her own home. At her advanced age, she no longer hopes to escape her situation, but she will tell her life story with plenty of bile and bitterness if the PCs are sympathetic to her.

The Sorcerer Giant and His Three Sons

Starkad the Sorcerer rules as patriarch of the family, and he claims kinship with Surt, king of the fire giants. Starkad runs to fat, with a potbelly and a beard fading to gray marked by spots of red, like embers. His cunning and wisdom in magic and runes allow him to act as a 7th-level fire elementalist wizard (see *Tome of Magic*, page 9). He particularly enjoys creating a *phantasmal force* of himself while he stands nearby protected by *improved invisibility*.

Starkad: INT high; AL LE; AC −1 (−5); MV 12; HD 15+5; hp 125; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10+10; SZ G (25'); ML 16; XP 14,000; MC 1.

His memorized spells include *affect normal fires, enlarge* (×2), *fire burst*, phantasmal force; detect invisibility, flaming sphere, Maximillian's earthen grasp*, shatter; fireball, haste, protection from good 10' radius; fire shield, improved invisibility*. He wields a two-handed sword set with a huge ruby worth 130 marks (2,080 gp).

Starkad is aware of his sons' failings of pride, gluttony, and malice but has resigned himself to them. He is extremely possessive of Ingrid and abusive to Bestla. He keeps Ingrid from leaving by means of a stronger version

New Runes

Follow-Rune

Ingrid's *follow-rune* allows her to compel others who fail their saving throw to follow where she leads, at double their normal movement rate, from the time the rune is drawn until the next sunset. The rune is generally drawn in snow, dirt, or sod outdoors, though it may be carved into a tree. Trips over eight hours require a system-shock roll from running creatures (mounts or PCs); failure results in a halving of Strength, Constitution, and hit points until the creature has rested for two hours for every hour spent running. Anyone who willingly follows where Ingrid leads is assumed to fail the saving throw.

The *follow-rune* allows runecasters to force superstitious Vikings into supernatural realms. Like all rune magic, it involves a large degree of DM interpretation.

Geas-rune

Starkad claims he was given the knowledge of this powerful rune as a gift from Surt, the king of the fire giants. Regardless of its origin, it is a potent improvement on the *follow-rune*. Casting this rune takes a full 30 minutes. It must be carved in soft metal, such as bronze, gold, silver, or brass, usually with iron tools. In addition to its regular form, the rune has two alternate forms that only high-level runecasters can successfully complete. The ordinary form of the rune must be learned before either of the modified forms can be attempted.

If successfully drawn, the rune allows the caster to compel specific movements from the victim, who is entitled to a normal saving throw. The caster need not lead the victim. For instance, the rune might compel someone to always return to the site where it was drawn before the next sunrise, or it might send someone into magical exile. It might force someone to become a wanderer, always moving on before spending more than a month in any one place.

The *geas-rune* can also be used to force the victim to leave the caster, perform some specific action (such as retrieving an object or spying on a region), and then return, but this more convoluted form of the rune requires at least a 10th-level caster and allows a bonus of +3 to the saving throw.

The increased movement rate of the *follow-rune* can be required of the victim, but this form of the rune is rare because the effects on the victim are so fatiguing. Since the caster does not lead the victim, rune magic in this form may result in the victim failing a system-shock roll after eight hours and being magically forced to continue. The victim must continue to make additional system-shock rolls every eight hours; if a second roll is failed before the journey is over, the victim dies. This exhaustion form of the rune requires at least a 12th-level runecaster and entitles the victim to a new saving throw every day, regardless of whether or not the victim is moving at double normal speed.

The effects of the *geas-rune* can be permanently broken only if the victim is either released by the caster or if the carved rune itself is destroyed. The only exception is the exhaustion form of the rune.

of the *follow-rune,* called a *geas-rune* (see sidebar). Starkad made the rune of gold (worth 200 marks or 3,200 gp for its metal and its magnificent intricacy) and hid it beneath the 1,200-lb. hearthstone (which requires a Strength of 24 to lift), where it still rests. If the rune were found and broken or given to Ingrid, it would lose its power. Starkad doesn't intend to tell anyone where it is, so magic or a good hunch are needed to find it.

Starkad's oldest son is clever Hendrik, the son most likely to be given the gift of magic when his father passes on his inheritance. Hendrik very much resembles his father when he was young, thin, and more ambitious than wise. He thinks very highly of himself. If Ingrid were to leave without his approval, he would see it as a personal slight.

Hendrik: INT very; AL LE; AC −1; MV 12; HD 15+4; hp 105; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+10 (additional +3 with spear); SZ G (24′); ML 16; XP 10,000; MC1.

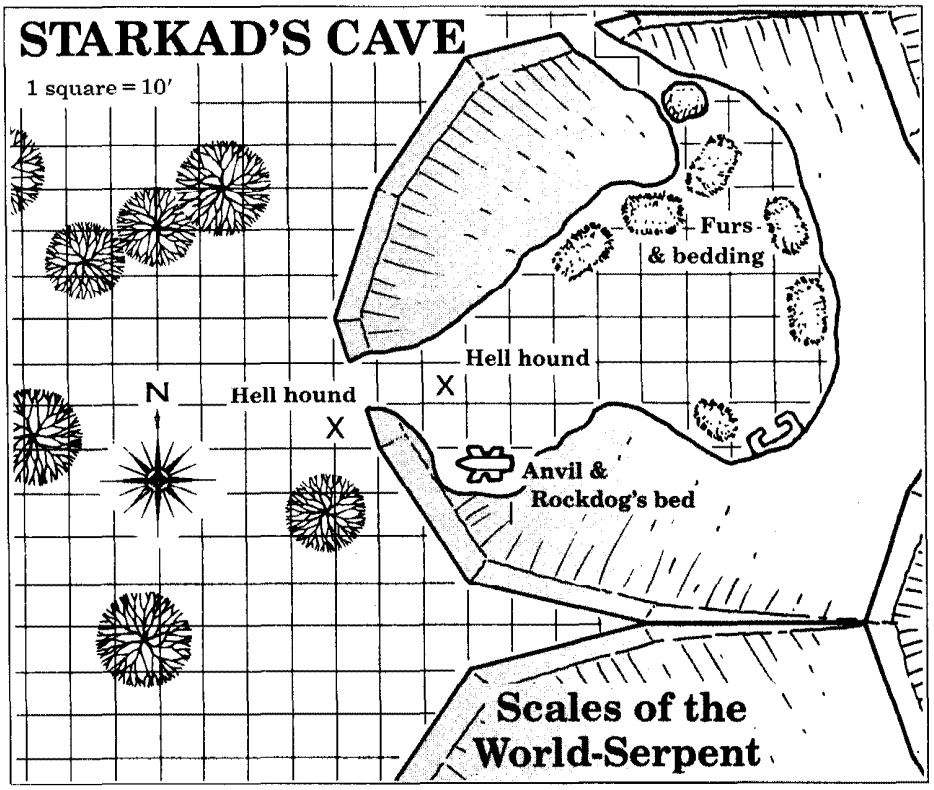
Hendrik carries a huge hammer for throwing (2d6+10 hp damage) and a huge *spear +3* for fighting. He is responsible for the dogs and treats them well, if only to be sure they stay completely loyal to him.

Gunnar, the middle son, is both a simpleton and a glutton, but he is fiercely loyal to his father and brothers. He drinks too much and eats incessantly, and consequently outweighs both his brothers put together. He would be enraged if Ingrid left the family under any but the most formal circumstances. Even then, he would miss her terribly. If he has been drinking, he may well brawl with PCs who win contests with his brothers. If he himself is beaten when drunk, he may refuse to acknowledge a victory.

Gunnar: INT low; AL LE; AC −1; MV 12; HD 15+3; hp 85; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10+10; SZ G (22′); ML 16; XP 10,000; MC1.

Gunnar carries a giant iron-shod club and a 4′-long drinking horn made from a genuine dragon-horn and trimmed with gold. The horn is worth 100 marks or 1,600 gp.

Einar is the smallest, youngest, and most resentful of the brothers. He is greedy, deceitful, and petty. Einar complains incessantly but with a good deal of wit. When cajoled, he can be a talented singer and storyteller. He doesn't care if Ingrid leaves. Einar carries a two-handed sword like his father's, set with sapphires worth 300 marks or 4,800 gp. He doesn't wear armor, allowing him to outrun his bigger, stronger brothers.



Einar: INT high; AL NE; AC 5; MV 15; HD 15+2; hp 65; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10+10; SZ G (20′); ML 16; XP 10,000; MC1.

Einar has hidden away a smallish treasure, though everyone in the family knows where it is. Under his sleeping furs is a crevice containing a golden mug worth 20 marks (320 gp), an ivory carving of a seal worth 10 marks (160 gp), and four reddish-purple garnets worth 30 marks each (480 gp).

The Contests

Both Ingrid and her mother have tried to free the young fire giantess from the force of Starkad's restrictive rune magic, with no success. If the PCs threaten Starkad, he and his sons will respond with force. If they try to offer a bride-price or bribe of some kind, the giants are insulted and threaten to kill the PCs unless they take their ignoble suggestions elsewhere immediately.

Starkad flatly refuses to allow Ingrid to leave unless the giants are defeated in a series of contests, but he won't suggest anything of the kind unless the PCs bring it up. Then, he demands that the PCs win the majority of a set number of contests, with a minimum of at least one contest per party member.

When the PCs declare their intent to defeat Starkad and his sons in fair contests, Starkad will prevent his sons from attempting to slay them outright. He is old and wise enough to understand that his daughter brought the adventurers here, and he has respect (not much, but enough) for mortal heroes who know the giants' tradition of riddling, wrestling, drinking, and other contests. Rather than risk his own and his sons' lives in combat to keep a daughter who is determined to leave, he sees this as an opportunity to either make or break his hold over her forever. If he loses, he can consider himself well rid of her. He has honored giantish tradition, and her escape reflects just as badly on his sons as on himself. If he wins, she may well lose hope and become as resigned as her mother, and he might then be able to marry her off to his own advantage without the embar-

rassment of having her refuse to obey the giant he determines will be her husband. Since the PCs are puny humans, Starkad feels fairly confident and looks forward to putting the adventurers in their place.

In addition to the usual contests, matches in skiing, singing, hunting, riding, or any other test of strength, skill, or wit may be proposed. The giants and the party take turns deciding the form of each contest until each of the party members has been forced to show his mettle. Each contest is settled by determining the *degree* of success: the difference between the needed roll for success and the actual roll. Reroll ties. Although the rolls determine victory or defeat in each contest, be sure to describe the effects of each roll (raucous giant laughter if the PCs fail a roll, stunned silence on a roll of 1, bitter argument and a call for a different contest in case of a tie).

The following list of preferred tests can be added to or shortened as circumstances and the number of party members dictates.

Einar suggests a singing contest, and his Charisma of 14 allows him to succeed in a proficiency check on a roll of 14 or less. If he succeeds with a 6 (difference of 8), and a PC with a Charisma of 16 succeeds with a roll of 10 (difference of 6), then Einar's clever song and puckish delivery win. Allow bards a bonus equal to their reaction influence modifiers (level divided by 3).

Gunnar suggests matching himself giant-horn to human-cup at the mead keg. Use a Constitution check with a −6 ability modifier to determine the winner. Given Gunnar's Constitution of 22, he will probably win unless the PC has some special advantage. Allow dwarves and the trollborn a bonus equal to the dwarven saving-throw bonus vs. poison.

Hendrik demands a no-holds-barred wrestling contest. Use the unarmed combat rules on pages 59 and 60 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and note Hendrik's +8 bonus in overbearing and his Strength bonus to damage in regular wrestling. He will not wear armor while wrestling (AC 5).

Starkad asks one of the PCs to match him in a contest of kennings, a subset of riddles and word games dealing with the Norse gods, runes, and legends. Any PC with the religion nonweapon proficiency must roll a Wisdom check to succeed, while others roll a Wisdom check with a −2 penalty. Starkad has a Wisdom of 16.

Bestla proposes a riddling contest (Intelligence check). She is an excellent riddler (I 17) when the giants guess at kennings around the hearth and has even stumped Starkad's vast wisdom and rune lore, but she will deliberately and blatantly lose the contest so that her daughter can see the world that Bestla herself was long ago denied by the *geas-rune* (and so that she can tweak her husband's family pride at the same time). This may provoke an angry matrimonial quarrel, which the PCs would do well to avoid. The clannishness of the giants will unite them all against anyone who meddles with what they see as purely a family affair.

If the Vikings rig contests, Starkad will be upset but not angry enough to send his sons to track and slay successful tricksters. Rigged contests could include retrieving a bracelet by crawling through an opening too narrow for a giant, or riding a mount unable to carry a giant. The younger giants laugh at this sort of trickery and see it as fair play. Given a series of six or more contests, they will use their own cunning against the PCs: a pine-cone picking contest, for instance, would be easy for the tall giants to win. At the DM's option, the giants could start cheating if they have lost one or more contests.

The contests should be an opportunity for the DM to be inventive in showing off the nonviolent side of the Viking world. Norse sagas (available at many libraries in translation) can provide additional inspiration for the DM. More, fewer, or different contests can be devised by the DM as desired.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs each win at least one contest, or if they win a few contests spectacularly, Starkad retrieves the rune from beneath the hearthstone and destroys it in the fire, setting Ingrid free. The ensuing parting is best described briefly. Bestla fusses over her daughter with mixed joy and concern and packs a sack of valuables, tools, and finery for her. Starkad disappears in a sulk, and Hendrik and Einar show various degrees of indifference. Gunnar drinks excessively, weeps noisily, and wishes Ingrid well.

If the PCs lose the majority of their contests, they are allowed to remain as guests for one night before being asked to leave. If the PCs choose to stay, the night is not pleasant. Starkad insults them by asking them to sleep near the fire with Rockdog, a position normally assigned to immature adolescents. The three brothers are impossible braggarts all night, recounting and embellishing their victories in toasts and song (although only Gunnar gets drunk).

If the PCs don't win the giants' respect in contests, they may try to find the rune to free Ingrid. Searching for it while staying as guests will prove almost impossible, as Starkad will assign Hendrik and one of the hounds to watch them until midnight, and Einar and a hound to watch until they leave at dawn the next morning. Ingrid is forbidden to leave the cave, and so she cannot return the PCs to the geysers of Isaland. Bestla mutters curses and defeatist sentiments to herself all night.

Stealthy reconnaissance after leaving the cave may be difficult because of the presence of the hell hounds, but powerful PCs probably have a number of ways to avoid them. If necessary, the DM may show mercy and allow them to go in the back way without incident. Finding the rune, getting all the male giants out of the cave, and lifting the stone will require luck as well as ingenuity.

If the PCs fail with both of the above methods, they may attempt to break the rune's power by slaying its caster. If they succeed, Ingrid will honor her promise to take them back across the snows (though she will not speak to her father's murderers), then return to the cave to comfort her mother before going out into the world.

Succeeding in the contests is worth 40,000 XP plus any special awards the DM wants to make for player ingenuity. If the PCs find and break the rune, the experience award should include 10,000 XP for achieving a nonviolent objective plus the usual experience points for slain monsters. If Starkad is slain, only experience points for slain monsters are awarded.

Regardless of how Ingrid is freed of the rune, the return trip to Isaland can be just as magically rapid as the arrival, since Ingrid is both grateful to the PCs and eager to leave Starkad's family lands. If the PCs fail in their task, the midwinter trip back can be as lengthy and difficult as the DM cares to make it.

Continued on page 71

THE FIRE GIANT'S DAUGHTER

Continued from page 48

Unless they slew her father, Ingrid will repay her debt to the PCs at some future date; her gratitude could take several forms. She might cast runes on their behalf, teach one rune to a rune-caster, or make a single magical gift for them (Brigit is the goddess of smiths, and Ingrid is an excellent ironworker). The exact type of gift is up to the DM. As another possibility, Ingrid's role as a priestess gives her influence in Isaland and could be used to increase the stature of the PCs if she were to either become their patroness or join their retinue.

If the PCs used stealth to free Ingrid, the breaking of the rune and loss of his only daughter will send Starkad into a rage. In his anger he orders Hendrik and Gunnar out after her with the hounds. If Starkad's sons attempt to gain vengeance, they track the party relentlessly, wait for the humans to settle in at night, and strike when most of the PCs are away from their mounts or asleep.

The giants attack the PCs' camp, steading, or settlement by indiscriminately lobbing boulders that have first been dipped in pitch and then set afire. Anyone trying to put out the fires will be harried with boulders, while those fleeing into the night will be chased by the hounds. If Ingrid is still with the party, she might discharge her debt to the PCs by leading her brothers on a wild goose chase (using the *follow-rune*), giving the party time to escape. She will not return for fear of bringing more destruction on the heads of the PCs and anyone associated with them.

Further Adventures

If the DM wants to develop Ingrid as an NPC, the PCs may well run across her again when she settles near the Isalandic hot springs. They might ask her for additional favors in metalworking or runecasting (which won't come cheaply), or she might become a regular source of gossip and helpful hints about other adventures the DM has prepared.

If the PCs are on good terms with Starkad's family, they may attempt to visit again and learn some of his rune magic or even fire magic. They may bear Ingrid's messages to Starkad when she feels enough time has passed to attempt to reestablish communication. Finally, because the fire giants' cave is at the edge of the world, it could be used as a jumping-off point to adventures in supernatural regions such as Muspelheim or Jotunheim. Leaving Midgard this way involves evading the Midgard serpent (which attempts to devour mortals), but Starkad might be willing to trick the serpent by carrying the PCs in a magical sack when he goes to visit his relations in Jotunheim. Ω

THE ULRICH MONASTERY

BY PETER ÅBERG

There's been a change in your welcoming committee . . .

Artwork by Robert Klasnich

Peter tells us that his inspiration for the setting of this adventure came from a trip he made in the dead of winter to the isolated ruins of an old monastery near Linköping, Sweden. "Fortunately, I didn't experience anything quite as exciting as the events described in this adventure."

This short AD&D® adventure is designed to be played by one player character and a Dungeon Master. The PC should be a cleric of level 5-6, belonging to a mythos with at least a minor sphere in divination.

Adventure Background

High in a mountainous region in the northern part of the kingdom lies the Ulrich monastery, a place renowned for the secluded air of deep calm that prevails there. Clerics travel to the monastery from all parts of the country in hopes of strengthening their personal faith and regaining their inner peace.

During winter, the journey is especially strenuous but well worth the additional effort. Crystal-white snow covers the gray rock, smoothing its jagged features into a landscape of graceful harmony, lending the place an even greater aura of peace and inspiration. Caravans regularly cross the mountains, even during winter, but the final portion of the trek must be performed by the cleric on his own as he climbs the steep and winding trail to the heights where the monastery is located. Fortunately, the mountains are quiet nowadays, with sightings of bandits or monsters being highly unusual.

For the DUNGEON MASTER™

The Ulrich monastery accepts clerics of all good (and most neutral) faiths. You are free to select the particular religion that runs the monastery. The PC need not be a member of this religion.

The PC may undertake the journey to the monastery as part of an atonement, as a way to get away from adventuring for a while, or simply as a gesture of devotion to his deity. The journey itself is uneventful, but when the PC arrives at the monastery, he finds that a terrible disaster has befallen it.

The monastery clerics and their guards were all killed in a surprise attack by a yeti two days prior to the PC's arrival. The attack came as they were gathered outside the monastery,

saying farewell to another visiting cleric. The yeti used its ability to conceal itself in snow to come very close to the unsuspecting group (dangerous monsters are rare in this region).

The first to be slain in the yeti's attack was the high cleric of the monastery (crushed by the creature's fearsome hug). The rest were an easy match for it as they were either unarmed or became paralyzed by its gaze. Of the seven killed, two (the visitor and the high cleric) were taken away by the yeti to its lair; the remaining five were stashed away for later consumption (the five bodies in area 1). The yeti plans on returning to collect them later (on the day following the PC's arrival).

It is important that you keep careful track of time during the course of this adventure. It is 4:00 P.M. when the PC arrives at the monastery. It will be completely dark by 5:00 P.M. At 10:00 A.M. the following morning, the yeti will return. The snowstorm in which the PC arrives will be less violent by then but still fierce enough to keep the cleric trapped in the monastery.

The yeti has no difficulty finding its way through the storm. It does not expect to see anything living at the monastery and does not take any precautions to keep itself hidden, yet its natural coloration and form of movement make it effectively invisible until it is within 10 yards of the building. Knowing now that humans are easily defeated, it does not hesitate to fight any new opponent it encounters. Remember, though, that it fears and avoids fire.

It takes the yeti three rounds to break through each set of the monastery entrance doors (to area 1 and to area 2) if they have been closed and the bars put in place. Any additional barricades behind the doors add 1-6 rounds each.

See "Defeating the Yeti" for more information on the yeti's tactics and its reaction to PC actions.

The Adventure Begins

The PC has been traveling on his own for two full days. Evening is approaching, and a violent snow storm is beginning to stir.

> With the monastery finally within sight, your pace quickens. Thoughts of sitting down to a warm meal and sleeping in a real bed again race through your mind. The journey hasn't been overly hard, but the cold is getting into your bones, and there is definitely a snowstorm brewing.
>
> Through the flakes of snow dancing wildly in the wind, you can see the tall doors at the entrance to the monastery. Oddly enough, considering the foul weather, they seem to be slightly open. Maybe it's just the dim light of dusk playing tricks on your eyes, or perhaps the monastery clerics have somehow detected your arrival.

At a distance, nothing else will seem to be wrong. The monastery windows are all tightly shuttered, and the gray stone walls of the building stand intact. The rear exit door is closed and securely locked. An observant PC will notice one more thing, however: There is no smoke coming out of any of the building's several chimneys (so there's not much hope for warm soup and a cozy bed).

The storm is rapidly growing in intensity, and the temperature is dropping. It should be clear to the PC that he needs to find shelter for the night. Finding it outdoors will be nearly impossible (and it will be extremely difficult to find fuel to get a fire going).

When the PC approaches the entrance to the monastery, he sees the following:

> On the ground close to the doors of the monastery there is a large reddish-colored area in the snow. A broken sword lies nearby. A trail of the same reddish color leads from this spot to the doors, and another leads off around the side of the building toward the higher mountain peaks behind the monastery. The latter trail is quickly becoming obscured by falling snow. Through the slightly open doors you can see only darkness.

The sword is finely ornamented with the holy symbol of the religion that operates the monastery (it belonged to one of the guards).

It is evident that a struggle has taken place here. The reddish-colored snow has the salty-iron taste of blood. There are several huge footprints on the ground, manlike in shape but much larger. The imprints are not particularly deep and are rapidly disappearing under the new-fallen snow. The trails of blood leading from the spot seem to have been formed by something dragging a heavy object.

The trail leading off toward the mountains can be followed only a few hundred feet before snow completely obscures it (and the weather has gotten much worse).

1. Antechamber.

> A terrible sight meets your eyes when you look through the monastery doors into the small antechamber beyond. The expressionless face of a man's severed head stares blankly back at you from atop a pile of badly mauled human corpses stacked against the far wall. All of the bodies wear thick robes decorated with the holy symbol of the monastery clerics. The floor surrounding the pile is covered with a frozen pool of dark-red blood.

All five bodies in the pile are frozen stiff. They all have deep slash wounds that appear to have been caused by claws or fangs. It is very difficult to tell how long they have been dead, due to their frozen state. Some personal belongings lie scattered about the chamber: another sword (identical to the broken one outside, but intact); a book of prayers; a small, heavy, gift-wrapped package (contains an ornate book of prayers, a farewell gift to the cleric returning home); and a set of keys (opens all door locks in the monastery).

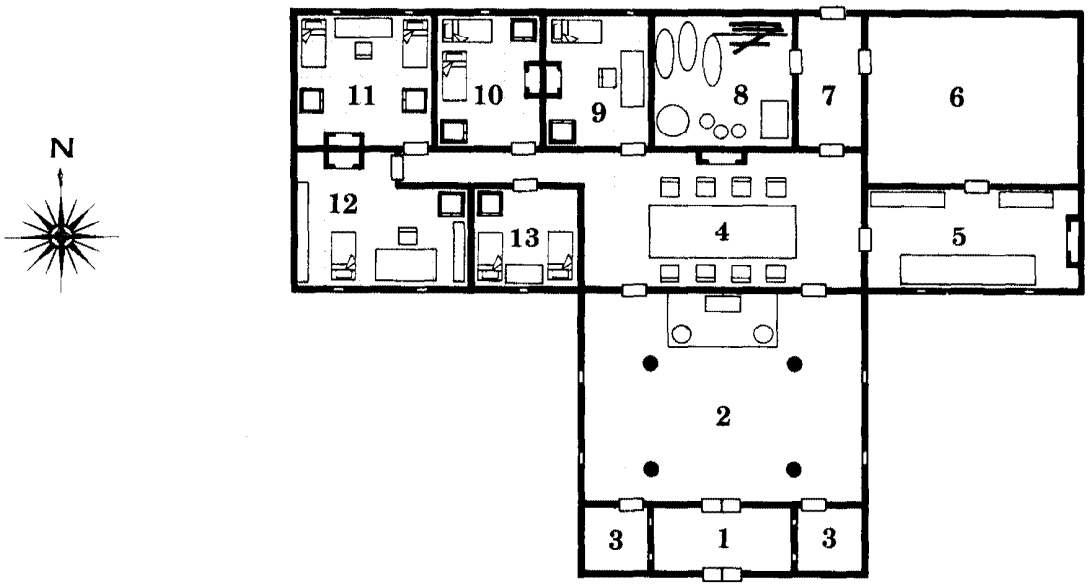
If the PC uses a *speak with dead* spell on any one of the bodies, all answers received are very brief and somewhat cryptic. If asked what killed them, the clerics reply either "the Snowman" (65%) or "a yeti" (35%). If the PC asks what to do about the creature, the clerics answer: "flames" (50%), "trap" (30%), and "hide" (20%). Questions concerning what to be careful about will be answered: "cold hug" (60%), "the eyes" (30%), "fear" (10%). Answers to other questions (such as how long the clerics have been dead) will be even more vague. A *raise dead* spell will not function on any of the bodies since they have been too badly damaged.

There is a sturdy bar on the inside of the doors; it is not in place right now. The rope holding the bar in a raised position passes through a hole in the wall to the west guard room (area 3).

The doors leading inward from the antechamber to area 2 are also open.

THE ULRICH MONASTERY

1 square = 3′



2. Altar Room.

An altar stands on a low dais at the far end of this large room. On the floor in front of it are several low wooden benches arranged chaotically, as if thrown about by a storm. To each side of the altar stands a tall, unlit brazier. There are several gold ornaments on the altar, and beautiful tapestries depicting serene mountain landscapes decorate the gray stone walls.

Some of the benches are damaged as if crushed by a heavy object (or a large foot). Closer inspection will reveal spots of blood on the floor and a deep gash (as if from claws) in one of the wooden pillars supporting the roof. The west door leading into area 4 has been forced open, splintering the wood around the lock. The altar has not been defiled. The gold ornaments on it can easily be removed (value 300 gp).

There is a bar on the doors leading to the antechamber (area 1). It is currently kept raised by a rope going through the wall to the west guard room (area 3).

3. Guard Rooms. These two rooms have access to the antechamber (area 1) through shuttered window slits. Each contains two heavy crossbows and a supply of bolts. Large objects (such as bottles) cannot pass through the slits.

In the west guard room, two ropes come down out of holes in the wall and attach to winches. The other ends of the ropes are attached to the bars behind the two sets of doors that close off the antechamber. Releasing these ropes causes the bars to fall in place.

4. Dining Hall.

The large dining table in this room is set with seven bowls lined with unidentifiable scraps of food. A loaf of bread lies in the middle of the table and several bottles stand around it. An iron cauldron hangs from a hook in the large fireplace on the north wall.

The door leading east has been smashed open. The cauldron still contains porridge, very cold by now. If the PC checks the fireplace, he will find the bricks underneath the ashes are still warm, indicating that a fire burned here no more than a day or two ago.

The bottles contain apple cider. The loaf is a bit dry but edible.

5. Kitchen.

The monastery kitchen looks as if a tornado swept through it. Everything is a mess, with pots and pans, broken jars, bread and porridge all over the floor and the tables. A door leading to a pantry has been smashed.

The bricks in the fireplace here are also slightly warm. There are several undamaged jars and other containers holding jams and spices strewn over the floor.

6. Pantry.

The barrels and crates in this room have been smashed open, spilling their contents of flour, salt, and dried meat all over the floor. A large piece of salted beef lies among the other food—a huge bite taken out of it. One wall is lined with shelves still holding bottles of various shapes and sizes (lots of apple cider!).

There is enough food here to have kept the monastery going through the winter.

7. Corridor. The door leading out at the end of this corridor is securely locked. The key is one of the set found with the bodies in area 1.

8. Storage Room. The sturdy iron door to this room is locked. The key may be found in area 1.

The room's walls are lined with piles of wood, sacks of charcoal, and a large barrel marked "Lamp Oil." There are also three smaller unmarked barrels. One open crate is full of blank pieces of parchment.

The three unmarked barrels contain a light, very fluid oil that burns easily (the lamp oil is thicker).

9. Guest Room.

> The furnishings in this neat bedroom are very simple: a bed, a small table, and a closet. Except for a piece of parchment lying on the table, the room is devoid of personal effects.

The piece of parchment is a short note: "Welcome, brother [PC's name], to the Ulrich monastery!" It is signed "High Cleric Alfred Rosh."

10. Clerics' Bedroom. This room contains two simple beds, only one of which appears to have been used recently. Holy symbols hang on the walls above both beds. One closet is empty, the other contains clothing as in area 11.

11. Clerics' Bedroom. This room is identical in furnishing to area 10, but both closets are full of clothing: winter garb (furs) and lighter summer apparel. On the wall above each bed hangs a holy symbol. There are no valuables here.

12. High Cleric's Chamber.

> There is only one bed in this large bedroom. The walls are lined with bookcases filled with books of various shapes and sizes. On the stone floor lies an expensive-looking rug, probably of eastern origin. Against one wall there is a desk on which lie two books: one large, ceremonial book of prayers and a smaller diary or journal. An ornate closet stands in a corner of the room, its open doors revealing ceremonial robes as well as normal clothing inside.

The books in the bookcases are all on the subject of religions in general and the monastery's religion in particular. There are also several books that deal with the wildlife and monsters that inhabit mountainous regions (this should be of interest to the PC!).

The diary contains daily entries that end two days ago. The last entry deals with the upcoming departure of the visiting cleric and the arrival of a new cleric, expected in a few days.

The closet contains a ceremonial robe that positively identifies its owner as the high cleric of the monastery.

The books that deal with monsters and wildlife in the mountains are fairly well detailed. If the PC tries to find information concerning yetis, he has a 15% chance per turn spent looking through the books of finding the proper reference. If he is unsure of what he is looking for, there is a 25% chance per hour that he will stumble upon some mention of yetis (you will have to decide what other monsters are described in addition). The information found reveals the yeti's diet, immunities, special attacks, and weaknesses.

A chest underneath the bed contains 1,200 gp, 313 sp, two potions of *healing*, and one potion of *fire breath*, as well as 10 small vials of mercury (for the spell *resist fire/cold*) and several sticks of incense. The two *healing* potions are in identical (although unmarked) bottles. If the diary is read carefully, the PC will find an entry mentioning the purchase of a potion of *fire breath* from a visiting cleric some months ago.

13. Guards' Room. There are two beds in this small room. Two sets of banded mail hang in a closet along with spare swords. Under each bed is a small chest containing 121 gp and 43 sp.

Defeating the Yeti

The yeti is only out to retrieve its food and defend its territory. It will fight very hard to succeed in accomplishing both. Even if the PC has moved the bodies of its victims outside (in a futile attempt to bury them, for instance), the yeti will want to eliminate anyone it considers a new threat to its dominion over this region. Once wounded, it fights fiercely until its wounds are too severe (reduced to less than 25% of its maximum hit points); then it attempts to flee back to its cave.

Ridding the monastery of the yeti will be tricky. The PC must utilize everything he can find in the building to help him. Knowing about the yeti's aversion to fire will help a great deal. Trapping the yeti in the antechamber (area 1), then dousing it with oil from area 8 and attacking with flaming crossbow bolts (if the PC's religion permits him to use them) will certainly weaken it. (Unless the flames get totally out of control, the monastery will not burn. Only the roof is made of wood.)

If the PC dares to use the potion of *fire breath*, it will have dramatic effects. A strategically placed *wyvern watch* spell should also help. All in all, the PC has a fair chance if he keeps his wits about him (remember that he has a chance to memorize spells, if he manages to get some sleep during the night).

Yeti: INT average; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA squeeze; gaze paralyzes; SD immune to normal cold (fire causes 50% more damage); invisible in snow and ice; SZ L; ML 14; XP 420; MC1.

The yeti's cave is located half a mile from the monastery. It will be difficult to locate, but the PC may eventually succeed (once the storm is over and he can go outside again) by following a trail of scattered personal belongings from the two men the creature dragged to its lair (the high winds will have blown away the snow covering the debris). If the yeti was not killed at the monastery, it is in its lair, recovering from its wounds.

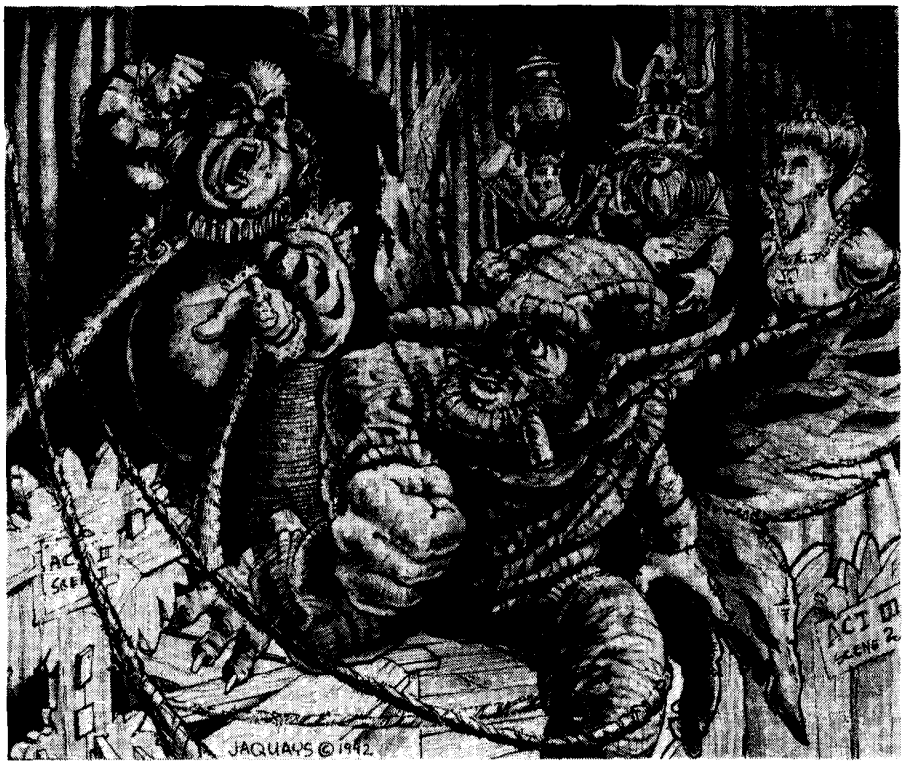
There is little of value in the cave except the bones of the clerics whom the yeti carried away. A search will reveal 232 gp and 47 sp as well as a small gem worth 100 gp.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the yeti is killed or driven off, the PC is free to leave the monastery or stay until the next party of clerics arrives in five days.

If the PC decides to keep for himself any valuables he found in the yeti's lair or in the monastery, a shift in alignment may be necessary. If the cleric worships a lawful deity, such actions will be frowned upon by his superiors, and a new atonement quest may be in order.

Ω



LEGERDEMAIN

BY MATTHEW MICHAEL PATRICK SCHUTT

It's opening night. Break a leg!

Artwork by Paul Jaquays

Matthew says, "I was born in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, a town that bored me even when I was an infant. My family moved around to several places in the U.S., including California and Louisiana. These experiences helped to shape me into the person that I am today: a college dropout with a favorite beer (Killian's Red), a phobia (bats), a fetish (girls named Heather), and an insatiable appetite for books."

"Legerdemain" (an act of covert adroitness) is the name of a magnificent theater, the place of action in this adventure and an intriguing setting that can be used in a continuing campaign in any city. This AD&D® adventure is designed for 3-5 player characters of levels 4-7 (about 22 total levels). The adventurers must halt the criminal activities of a mysterious malefactor who uses the theater as a battleground. Because of the nature of this adventure, it is recommended for characters accustomed to civilization: noble fighters, aristocratic rogues, mages and clerics of higher sophistication. Barbarians, thugs, and greedy killers should not be approached for this kind of employment.

For the Player Characters

The adventure begins as the PCs return to a city, their current base of operations, from a bout of heavy adventuring. Therefore, this scenario can be easily slipped into any campaign, but the city should be a fairly large and advanced one to support a theater such as Legerdemain.

As the party enjoys some post-adventure revelry, they are approached by a small, smartly dressed man with thin dark hair and a quiet demeanor. He introduces himself as Kurin Earntor and quickly states his business.

> "First, let me apologize for abusing your courtesies so, but I need aid desperately and am willing to reward you heavily. May I explain my dilemma?
>
> "I am the owner and manager of Legerdemain, the local theater. We are rehearsing a new play, to be presented two nights hence, but I am not sure if the production will proceed as scheduled.
>
> "You see, my problem lies with one of my employees, Prym Glammer. He is the director of play productions. Of

late, it has been common for Prym to be seen about the lowlier sections of town, conducting conferences with individuals of a questionable nature for reasons unknown. Also, Prym has been making unnecessary changes in the play at the last moment, and provides no excuses for these changes.

"Of course, these two circumstances would normally not appear to be connected by any stretch of reasoning. However, only hours ago I overheard him mumbling in his sleep as he caught a catnap in his office. He spoke the name 'Skylltor Rhune' and promised that he was going to perform such horrible acts upon this man that I was severely frightened just to have heard them! Quite horrifying! I'm afraid that Prym plans to assassinate Skylltor during the opening night performance at Legerdemain.

"Believe me, this makes sense. Rhune enjoys lending great sums of money, and Prym is one of his more substantial debtors, giving him a perfect motive. And since Skylltor is a major benefactor of the theater, he never misses an opening night performance. It would be a convenient time for Prym to conduct whatever devilish plots he's got brewing in his head. And why else would he make late changes in the play? To better accommodate the assassination!

"Naturally, all this business makes me anxious for the safety of my theater, not to mention the welfare of one of its major contributors. And as if these worries weren't enough, my daughter Tivity, who is a member of the cast, threatens to quit at this late date, and the star of the play, Thespor Myrmesstan, has apparently been bitten by the tick of madness. He's been wandering about aimlessly, quoting old plays. I can only hope they hold themselves together long enough for the play to run smoothly.

"But I digress. Your mission would be to get to the bottom of this business with Prym. So I wish to hire you as temporary stagehands, working backstage to keep a close eye on activities there and attempt to prove or disprove my theory of Glammer's criminal intentions. If he means ill, stop him if possible."

To convince the party that his suspicions are not paranoid (or at least to pique their curiosities), Kurin offers as reward three flawless gems—a ruby, an emerald, and a diamond—each worth 1,500 gp. If the PCs agree to the deal, Kurin instructs them to report for work at Legerdemain at daybreak the following morning.

Kurin Earntor: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9.

Reporting for Work

The Dungeon Master may allow the PCs to spend the remainder of their evening preparing for whatever eventualities they can think of, but the true adventure begins when the party reports for work the next morning. Kurin will have instructed them to enter the theater by the back door leading to area 9, where they will receive their work assignments from Prym Glammer.

The adventurers will not, of course, be allowed to openly carry weapons, spell books, and the like, as this is not in character for stagehands. To remain as discreet as possible, the PCs will have to leave behind even such items as staves, helms, jewelry, and any other odd stuff, thus depriving them of any magical items that cannot be concealed. The DM should use reason concerning devices in the form of caps, shoes, etc. The idea is for the PCs to do a bit of acting themselves to play the part of "normal folk."

As the PCs enter Legerdemain, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Once through the door, you are struck by a rage of activity. The entire hall is a veritable maze of stage props and equipment. Weaving among these obstacles, stagehands are hammering sets, actors are going over their lines, and several young people are carrying messages to and fro. The only people not worked into a frenzy are the handful of guards standing about, watching the chaos with amusement.

At the center of all this hubbub, a man with long hair balding at the top, dressed in the glittering clothes of a nobleman without taste, screams orders to the entire chamber at a frantic pace. This is obviously Prym Glammer. Stagehand minions surround the director, intent on carrying out his every will and whim.

Before you have a chance to react to this confusion, a 3½'-tall implike creature approaches your party and demands, "What's your business here?"

The imp is actually a gnome actor in costume. His name is Torlharlanninen, but most people just call him Torl.

Torlharlanninen, gnome: AL N; AC 10; MV 6; 0-level gnome; hp 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9.

Torl is a regular at Legerdemain, playing all the "short" parts. The gnome is rude to the party until they mention Kurin Earntor. He then apologizes for his curt attitude and escorts the PCs to the director, Prym Glammer.

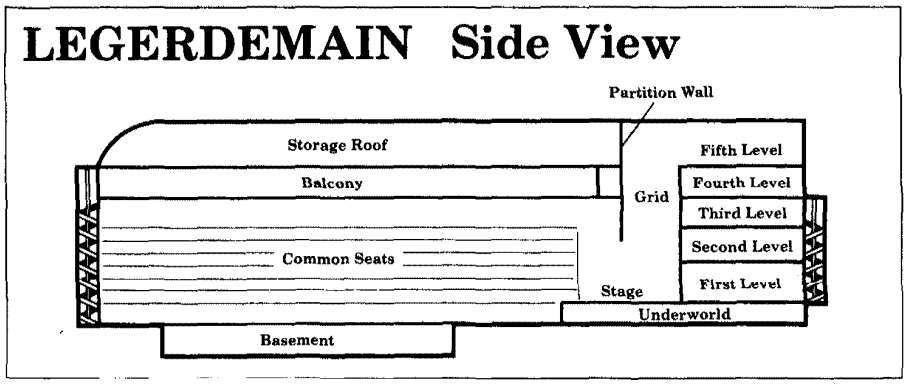
Prym Glammer: AL N; AC 8; MV 12; I6; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 16, C 5, I 18, W 11, Ch 13; ML 12.

Prym was denied a lucrative adventuring career because of his poor Constitution. His genius more than makes up for his lack of stamina, and he finds his job at the theater much more suitable than dungeon-tromping. He is proud of the fact that his talents at bringing together an entertaining production are second to none.

Many of the special effects in Legerdemain's plays are provided by Prym's repertoire of illusionist spells: *audible glamer* (×2), *cantrip, phantasmal force* (×2), *darkness 15' radius, fog cloud, improved phantasmal force, gust of wind, invisibility 10' radius,* and *spectral force.* He relies on a *ring of blinking* and a *wand of illusion* (25 charges) for his defensive and offensive prowess.

Prym is at first confused, then angered by the presence of the PCs, though he does not take this out on them. The director and the theater owner have had their petty battles in the past, and Prym believes that these new "employees" are actually informants hired by Kurin to keep an eye on his use of the theater's budget.

While muttering a few expletives at Kurin's expense, Prym assigns the PCs a few tasks. The exact assignments are unimportant. Two or three PCs may be ordered to do touch-up painting on the set's scenery. A pack of them might be sent to the basement to sort old costumes, deciding what should be kept and what should be tossed. Any character with musical talent will be sent



upstairs to area 47 to bother the musical director.

Prym is not concerned about the quality of the PCs' work, only that they remain out of his way. He will certainly not tolerate any direct questioning at this point. Thus the PCs are given a chance to investigate matters on their own. Torlharlanninen offers the party a quick tour of Legerdemain and can introduce key members of the cast and crew. "I don't have anything to do for the next hour or so," the gnome explains. "Just let me exchange this costume for some real garb."

While awaiting Torl, the party encounters Tivity Earntor, the theater owner's daughter, as she searches for a seamstress to fix her costume.

This young woman's interest in the theater was inevitable, because she grew up within the walls of Legerdemain. Tivity is an accomplished actress but very intense and competitive, so she appears to be a real shrew to those who first meet her.

One of the PCs accidentally bumps into Tivity as she races through the crowded area. The young actress, already wound up, loses her self-control, grabs the nearest piece of stage lumber, and turns to strike the hapless adventurer. Tivity's impromptu weapon breaks instantly, no matter what it hits; the wood is part of a special door that is designed to be smashed open during the play. Tivity certainly doesn't wish to seriously hurt anyone, but her fiery temper has been unleashed. The victim can defend himself from her tantrum, but he shouldn't overreact.

After fellow party members and stagehands peel Tivity away, she glares at the PC and storms off to find a seamstress. Several of the Legerdemain crew warn the party to avoid Tivity whenever possible, as she is especially caustic to strangers.

Tivity Earntor: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10.

Just as the PCs are catching their breath after the encounter with Tivity, they notice a gaunt, dark-haired man in the make-up of an actor watching them intently from the partial concealment of a stage-set wall. If the PCs move around the area or explore elsewhere in Legerdemain, this person follows them discretely to learn what he can about them. If discovered and confronted, he claims to be curious and thereafter minds his own business.

This gentleman joined the Legerdemain troupe of actors just as the present production began. If questioned further, Karth claims to be descended from an ancient family of brilliant philosophers and diplomats. Since he did not have the proper mental tools for such work, he left to learn other trades.

Karth Weylund: AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; F4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/50, D 14, C 14, I 9, W 10, Ch 16; ML 13.

Just as the PCs dispose of this minor annoyance, Torl returns to show the party around the theater. Allow the players to look at the maps of the theater. However, Torl cannot grant access to any blocked areas and will avoid private offices and dressing rooms on his tour.

Supporting Cast

The PCs may choose to ignore the duties given them by Prym Glammer and instead spend their time questioning the other employees of the theater. Most of the NPCs interviewed will try to garner sympathy for their own particular group. The gridhoppers complain of being taken for granted, the musicians are understaffed, the guards are not paid enough, and so on. Some of the NPC-employees are described below, but others may be added at the DM's discretion. All NPCs are zero-level humans (unless otherwise noted) with statistics equal to those given for Kurin Earntor (see "For the Player Characters").

Thespor Myrmesstan: AL LG; hp 8. Thespor can be found hiding in one of the out-of-the-way rooms (such as area 33 or 45). He is reading over the script of the current play and intoning the lines aloud. He ignores the party unless confronted, then he calmly states "How now goes the raging nymph whose fires steam on a sea of ignorance?" or "A duplicate's temperament fairs now naught well in his mission of rue," or "The motives of an unknown puppet-master in shrouded mystery remain." After spouting his nonsense, the madman waits for a reply, then departs, humming ominous tunes to himself. Anyone who uses *ESP* or similar magicks on Thespor is assaulted with bizarre and twisted scenes of various locales and encounters: "flashbacks" of Thespor's life. Though mind reading will reveal little useful information, the PC will know that this person is a stark raving loony.

Berrin Stolldan: AL NG. Berrin is tall and wiry but very strong. He is the self-appointed captain of the gridhoppers. His boisterousness makes him likable at first meeting but quickly grows to be a nuisance. Berrin will gladly talk with the party for a moment while the other hoppers continue working. He can be found at any entrance to the grid.

Sa'al, half-elf: AL CN. Sa'al is not a native of this country, but her talent won her the job as musical director of Legerdemain. She is a comely woman who dresses in long dark-blue gowns. She will converse with PCs only during the short break periods she allows the orchestra. Even then, communication will be difficult because of her thick foreign accent. Sa'al is always found in area 47.

Fest Ultaun: AL LG. This older gentleman performs his duty as theater janitor with a great sense of dignity. He dresses in simple work clothes, but they are impeccably clean. Fest will talk with strangers as long as he gets a chance to talk about his brother, Gam,

who is a powerful druid adventurer. Fest wanders about the backstage floors.

Payne Harperstone: AL NG. Payne is encountered while rehearsing vigorously for tomorrow's performance. This journeyman actor sees himself as a craftsman. He prefers not to get mixed up in the politics of the theater, so questioning him may be more difficult than others. Payne may be found in areas 6 or 9.

Daythuss Anicorn: AL N. This middle-aged playwright is not pleased with the manner in which her script is being brought to the stage. She can be found backstage (area 9) giving her critique of the play to Prym Glammer, the cast, or perhaps a sympathetic guard.

Legerdemain

The map on the opposite page is a cross-sectional view of the entire building, showing the relationships of the levels and floors. The common seats (area 3) are set in an amphitheater that is open to the roof of the building. The storage roof level and balcony level are enclosed, wrapping around the open seating area in the center. The partition wall separates the common seats from the backstage floors. The "grid" is an open space between the partition wall and the backstage floors. To improve the clarity of this diagram, we've omitted the stairs to the common seats; the stairs connecting the third and fourth backstage floors; and the posts holding up the balcony level, partition wall, and ceiling of the "underworld" level. The backstage floors connect with the partition wall to the north and south; this is shown clearly on the top-view maps.

Lighting is a problem only in certain parts of the theater; all other areas are lit by normal lamps. Eight huge magical chandeliers hang from the roof of the amphitheater (in areas 2-4 and 6). These fixtures can be made to glow brighter and to darken by simple command words. The basement and storage roof levels and certain rooms in the backstage floors are not illuminated, as noted in the text.

All armed guards described below are common men-at-arms employed by the theater. They know nothing about Legerdemain's current problems and so cannot help the PCs in their investigation.

Guards: AL N; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; ring mail, shield, long sword.

The guards also brandish wicked-looking halberds, but these are only for show, being dull and thin bladed. In combat, the guards use their long swords.

The Grid

The "grid" is the common name for the complex system of ropes, cords, pulleys, beams, and hooks that fills the area between the partition wall and the backstage levels, starting 15′ above the stage and extending to the roof. The grid is used in lowering and raising heavy props to and from the stage. The stage curtains are also controlled here. The men who work this system, called "gridhoppers," are expert professionals, so accidents are extremely rare as long as they are not interrupted. This place is much like the treetops of a dense jungle, with rope-vines and beam-branches.

One 2′ × 5′ suspended platform (which resembles a wide swing) can be moved about the grid. It is used by the hoppers when hauling heavy objects or repairing the grid. A strong net is hooked at the base of the ledge on the third backstage floor (area 40), though it must be removed when props are lowered and raised. The net covers the entire bottom of the grid and is designed to catch any tools that may be dropped accidentally, though it is strong enough to halt a falling person. During performances, a black tarpaulin covers the net, so the lamps hanging from the ceiling do not throw shadows onto the stage.

Movement rates in the grid are 30′ per round for the gridhoppers, 10′ for nonexperts. A nonprofessional who tries to move within the grid must first make a Dexterity check to avoid falling. If the character does fall, additional Dexterity checks must be made, one for each 5′ fallen. If any check succeeds, the character has halted his fall by grasping something such as a rope, but takes 1-2 hp damage for every 5′ fallen (caused by hitting ropes and bouncing off beams).

Anyone who falls to the bottom of the grid and lands in the net suffers no additional damage. However, there is a 2-in-6 chance that the unfortunate victim will strike the ledge (area 40) and suffer normal falling damage in addition to all previous damage. If the net has been removed and the ledge is missed, the victim falls to the stage and takes damage appropriate to the height fallen (15′-45′).

Anyone in the grid who is struck from above by a falling body takes 1-6 hp damage and must make a Dexterity check at −4 or also fall.

Combat is extremely difficult in the grid. No Dexterity or shield bonuses apply. Everyone suffers a −2 penalty to all attacks, damage, and saving throws, because of the instability of fighting in such an environment. Anyone who is struck twice or more in one round must make a Dexterity check or fall. Spellcasting is possible only from the suspended platform, and only if the swing is completely motionless.

Gridhoppers will attempt to shoo away all intruders, but not with force. If combat occurs, all gridhoppers flee the area by the quickest route. They await the battle's end and then return to work, repairing any damage that may have occurred.

Ground Level and First Backstage Floor

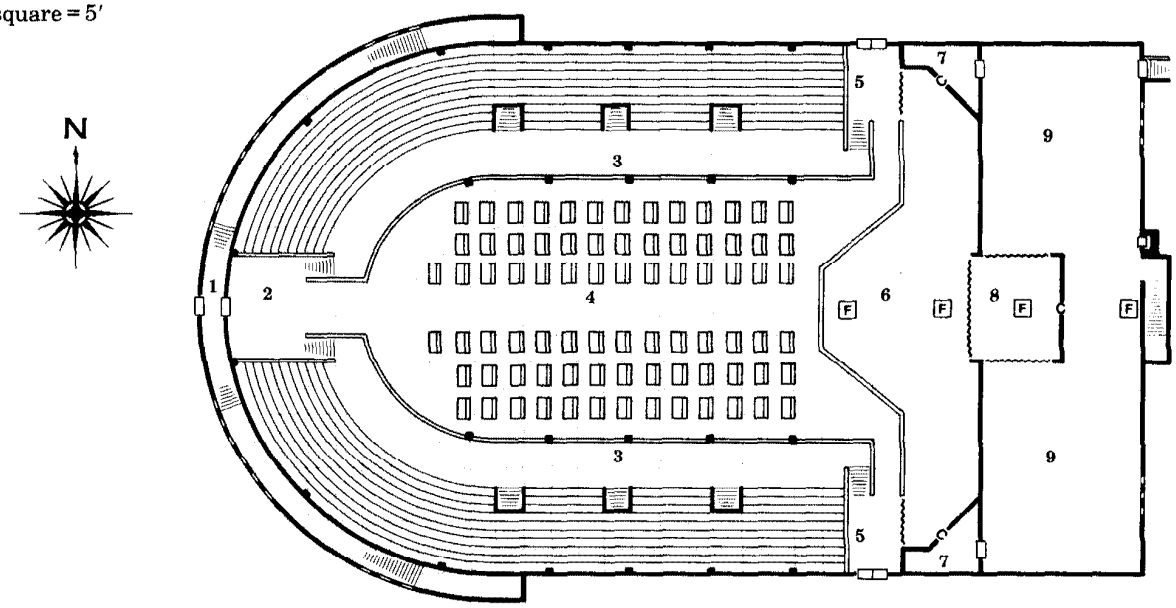
1. Entrance Hall. The walls to the entrance hall are stone, as are the stairs (the rest of the theater is built of wood). Shuttered windows pierce the outer wall, and torch sconces line the inner wall. There is only one entrance door, so that the crowd gathered outside must enter in single file. Ushers escort upstairs any audience members who present balcony writs. Two guards stand at the first entry door, making sure no one without a balcony writ goes upstairs.

2. Commoner's Entrance. During performances, two additional guards and a doorkeeper stand just inside the entrance to this area. The doorkeeper makes sure that every person entering deposits a copper coin into a box. This is the price of a common seat.

3. Common Seats. Stairs lead up to a walkway that runs in front of the seats and is bordered by a railing. This walkway is 5′ above area 4. The seats themselves are simple wooden bleachers that hold about 1,000 people. In six places, the benches are broken by steep stairs that lead to the sub-level.

LEGERDEMAIN
Ground Level and First Backstage Floor

1 square = 5′



4. Center Seats. Those people who prefer (and can afford) a center seat pay one additional silver piece to the doorkeeper at the entrance to this area. The seats here are simple, short couches that hold two or three people each. Anyone who wishes to leave this area and then return later (to visit the toilets, perhaps) must ask the doorkeeper to pour a globule of soft wax onto the back of his hand. The wax is then stamped with the signet of the theater as proof of payment. The average capacity of this area is 250 people. The area within the circle of the balcony is open all the way up to the roof.

5. Common Exits. The double doors at each of these locations open outward so that the crowd can leave easily after a performance. During shows, two guards are stationed at each exit, and the doors are bolted from the inside so that no one sneaks in without paying. These doors may not be used while a play is in progress, as such comings and goings annoy the actors on the stage.

6. Main Stage. The stage is elevated above the floor of area 4, and its edges are rimmed with a foot-high rail. Trapdoors set into the stage floor lead to the "underworld" level. The trapdoors are useful for dramatic effects, such as sudden entrances and exits under the cover of smoke or fog. When the huge curtain is down, the trapezoidal section of the stage at the front remains exposed. Concealed doors in the wings lead to dark areas (area 7) where actors wait for their cues to enter the scene. A curtain hides the aft stage (area 8). During the action, the stage is lit up with lamps hanging from the partition wall.

7. Dark Rooms. Actors use these rooms for entrances and exits during a scene. The concealed doors are part of the wall and become part of the scenery. The entrance could be disguised as a cave mouth, an opening among trees, or even a real door. These rooms are dark so they cannot be seen into during the play.

8. Aft Stage. This alcove is part of the main stage, used on special occasions. The trapdoor leads to the "underworld" level. It also serves as an entry to the stage for workers during scenery changes.

9. Work Area. This huge hall bustles with activity during rehearsals and productions. Stage equipment is stacked everywhere, so the place appears to be a mess, although everything is exactly placed to be handy when needed. Chairs are set up near the north wall for the actors and actresses to rest on before and after performances. The trapdoor drops to the "underworld," and the stairs lead up to the second backstage floor.

Sub-Level

10. Storage Compartments. An arc of storage cabinets is fitted beneath the common seat walkway. The doors, accessible from area 4, are concealed to appear as simple wall panels. The items stored here are used for building sets and scenery: tools, paints, cloth, lumber, and so on.

11. Gathering Areas. The occupants of the common seats may gather in these areas below the bleachers during intermissions. The ceilings are slanted, 45′ high at the outer walls and approaching 5′ at the inner walls.

12. Toilets. These rooms, provided for both ladies and gentlemen, are directly above the city sewer tunnels 18' below (see area 14).

13. Basement Stair. The door to the stairs is locked. The stairs lead to area 15 of the basement level.

Basement Level

14. Sewer Tunnel. The tunnel is, on the average, 6' wide and 10' tall. It leads to other systems of tunnels, which lead all through the city. The tunnel is about 10' lower than the basement.

15. Entrance Room. Little is stored in this room. Scummy water leaks from the north wall and covers half the floor in a murky puddle. Stacked against the west wall are bags of abused costumes and a box of simple household items. The costumes are filled with the stench of mold and decay. The door in the east wall is unlocked.

16. First Storage Room. Most of the east wall in this room is crusted with mud and gook, and the floor has been taken over by a puddle. Because of the amount of muck here, nothing is stored in this room but scrap lumber and trash. Tapping on the west wall (north of area 15) produces a hollow thud. The center of the wall is weak and easily knocked away to allow access to area 17.

17. Sealed Room. As this room was being dug out, it became evident the soil was too soft. Even now the walls threaten to collapse. The room is 6" deep in mud. The door is sealed shut with plaster, but water still seeps through into the surrounding rooms.

18. Second Storage Room. The muck puddle ends a few feet into this room. More unusable costumes hang in the closets, and the open area is stacked with bolts of colored cloths and canvas, boxes of diningware, a variety of fake plants, a hanging chandelier, and the equipment necessary to simulate a magic carpet and flying bats.

19. First Storage Alcove. This room holds several prop tombstones; a variety of urns, dishes, utensils, and statuettes painted to appear as gold or silver; wilderness backdrops depicting a forest, a cityscape, mountain ranges, and ocean beaches; several man-sized dancing skeleton puppets; and a special plaster statue. This statue was used as an omen in a past melodrama. When operated correctly, the eyes of the statue weep fake blood.

20. Second Storage Alcove. Props for temple scenes fill this area: altars, bells, candelabra, chimes, gongs, idols, and so on. The door in the eastern wall is locked.

21. Security Storage. Each of the closets in this hall is locked. Their contents are as follows:

A, E, F. Empty.

B. Gaudy but well-crafted items used as magical props: swords, crystal balls, braziers, helms, horns, scarabs, wands, staves, rods, etc.

C. Devices that simulate spells, such as flash powder, silvery nets, and glass spheres filled with phosphorescent liquids.

D. A system of sheets and wires (equipment for a ghost) and potions of *growth, levitation,* and *invisibility.*

G. Set upon a table are real alchemical equipments and glassware, including alembics, beakers, decanters, balances, retorts, and distillers. Several paintings used to decorate indoor settings are stacked around the room. A folded *robe of blending* lies in an unlocked chest.

H. This room is filled with piles of woven silk. These curtains of silk are hung in front of the stage to simulate dream sequences.

Underworld Level

22. The Underworld. This area runs below the entire stage and backstage areas. Lamps hang from the low ceiling, and small ladders lead to each of the trapdoors through which actors and stagehands can get up to the stage quickly. The place is cluttered with crates of carpets, rugs, wooden planks, ropes, tools, and less-identifiable items.

Second Backstage Floor

23. Sound Effects Rooms. The stageside wall of each room has two peepholes, disguised on the outside as part of the scenery. Offstage sound effects, such as thunderstorms and approaching armies, are produced in these rooms using a crank-operated wind machine and hollow coconut shells, among other equipment.

24. Dressing Rooms. These are the private dressing rooms of the major stars in the play. The PCs are never welcome here.

25. Production Office. Here, Kurin Earntor's aide works out production costs and oversees basic theater management. The large desk in the center of the room is covered with a plan of the balcony level that indicates the occupants of each private box (the rich gentry of the city often purchase the use of these boxes for months at a time).

26. Manager's Office. Kurin Earntor's office holds a huge desk, a chest, a cabinet full of files, and a short couch. On the desk sit several crude diagrams of the theater stage, showing the work assignments for the current play. The center desk drawer contains keys to the following areas: 10, 13, 21 A-H, 49, 50, 51, 52, and the chest in room 27.

27. Private Storage. This locked, unlit room holds Legerdemain's treasury: bags of coins containing 500 sp, 600 gp, and 300 ep. In a locked chest are eight platinum ingots worth 20 pp each, an hourglass that contains 700 gp worth of gold dust, and a silver owl with opal eyes (500 gp total). This treasury is used to support the theater, so Kurin Earntor would naturally not appreciate its theft.

28. Custodial Storage. Piles of firewood are stacked against the east wall. Neat racks along the north and south walls support brooms, mops, and other cleaning tools. Linens and rags are stacked on shelves along the west wall. This room is unlit.

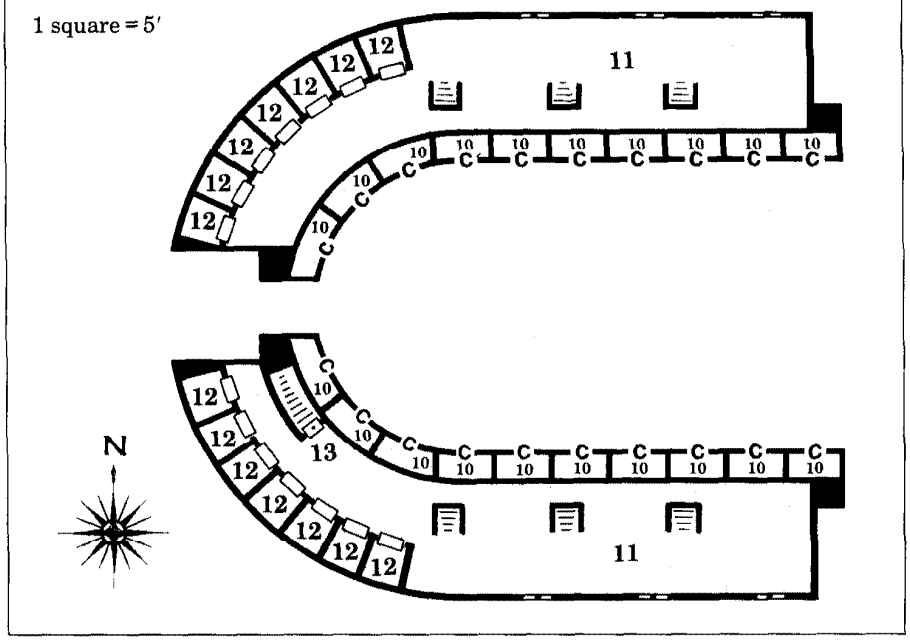
29. Actors' Lounge. Couches line the edges of the room, surrounding a dining table with six chairs in the center of the eastern section. The actors rest here before and after shows.

30. Common Dressing Room. This chamber is used by actors playing minor parts, and by "extras" who have no lines.

Third Backstage Floor

31. Costume Storage. This area is filled with long racks on which hang hundreds of costumes. Actors may be outfitted with any sort of armor (both real and fake); capes; gowns; and suits

LEGERDEMAIN
Sub-Level Below Common Seats



made of colorful silks, rich velvets, and fancy laces. There are costumes for jesters, fools, pirates, knights, friars, craftsmen, and royalty. Stored on the floor are several boxes filled with accessories: helmets, caps, scepters, wands, shoes, boots, and the like. This room is partially illuminated at night by torches from the stairs and hallway.

32. Additional Costume Storage. This room, like area 31, holds rows and rows of costumes, but these are of the monstrous variety, from halfling-sized gremlin suits to ogre costumes requiring two adult humans.

33. Back Room Storage. This unlit, secluded storage room contains a stack of mirrors; a roll of red carpet; several large animal puppets; various household items (combs, kitchen utensils, blankets, etc.); four wicker baskets full of thread and yarn; and sacks of ash for use during volcano and fire scenes.

34. Dressing Rooms. These rooms are similar to the dressing rooms on the floor below (area 24), though most of these are not in use.

35. General Office. A table sits in the middle of the room, surrounded by seven chairs. An eighth and ninth chair sit in the northern corners. A tack board on the west wall is pinned with dozens of announcements, many outdated. This room is used for impromptu meetings and is where the maintenance, acting, and stage crews are paid.

36. Hallway. This dark hallway is cluttered with unused chairs and stools.

37. Workroom. This room is filled with tables and benches. In chests and boxes are tools (saws, mallets, paints, brushes, etc.) for working on the stage scenery. Among hundreds of sheets of notes bound with a silk ribbon is the recipe for a harmless goo that strongly resembles green slime.

38. Director's Office. Prym Glammer's retreat contains a desk, chairs, and boxes of scripts, ledgers, and other notes.

39. Grid Workroom and Storage. The western section is stuffed with huge spools of rope and cord, extra pulleys and hooks, and tools for the grid. The side of the room away from the stage is used as a work area. Here a gridhopper may tie together a web of rope with a solid floor beneath his feet. The hall is lit up with huge lamps.

40. Ledge. This ledge, just above the partition wall, juts out only a few feet but gives the workers of the grid a place to rest and to deposit or pick up items as needed.

Balcony Level and Fourth Backstage Floor

41. Hall. During performances, a pair of guards is stationed at each of the stairway entrances to this hallway. They allow no one into the hall without an usher escort. During intermissions, the ushers light several lamps for the benefit of the people walking about in the hall.

42. Private Boxes. These seats hold a total of 140 people, six per box (eight people in the large central box). Rich aristocrats must purchase the use of these boxes well in advance. The large box directly opposite the stage can be reserved for the local ruler or another important NPC in the DM's campaign.

43. Orchestra Balcony. During the play, the musicians sit here in sight of the audience and above the stage. Not only do they supply music during songs and intermissions, they also play during action sequences to enhance the drama. This area is outside the partition wall.

44. Open Area. This area contains a large statue of a many-armed demon. Once the prop in a supernatural action-thriller, it has been demoted to use as a coat rack. This area is dimly illuminated from area 46.

45. Corner Storage. This infrequently used room is stuffed wall to wall with garbage: broken couches from area 4; old tools and paint cans; and a forge from the set of a smithy, now mostly torn apart for its spare lumber. The room is dark.

46. Lounge. This huge room is a rest area for the grid workers and musicians. Chairs and tables lay about the place in no ordered fashion. Firewood is stacked against the south wall, though

the fireplace and chimney are on the east wall. A floor-to-ceiling opening in the west wall is guarded by a wooden railing. This opening was cut so that the gridhoppers can be directed by one person not in the grid itself. This is particularly useful during complicated set changes and special effects, but for simpler productions the workers are instructed ahead of time and no stage manager is needed.

47. Music Room. This room is both the orchestra practice hall and the music director's office. Chairs sit in a half-circle in the center. Beyond them, in the northeast corner, a desk is cluttered with useless material. The door to area 48 is locked, but a key is kept in the desk.

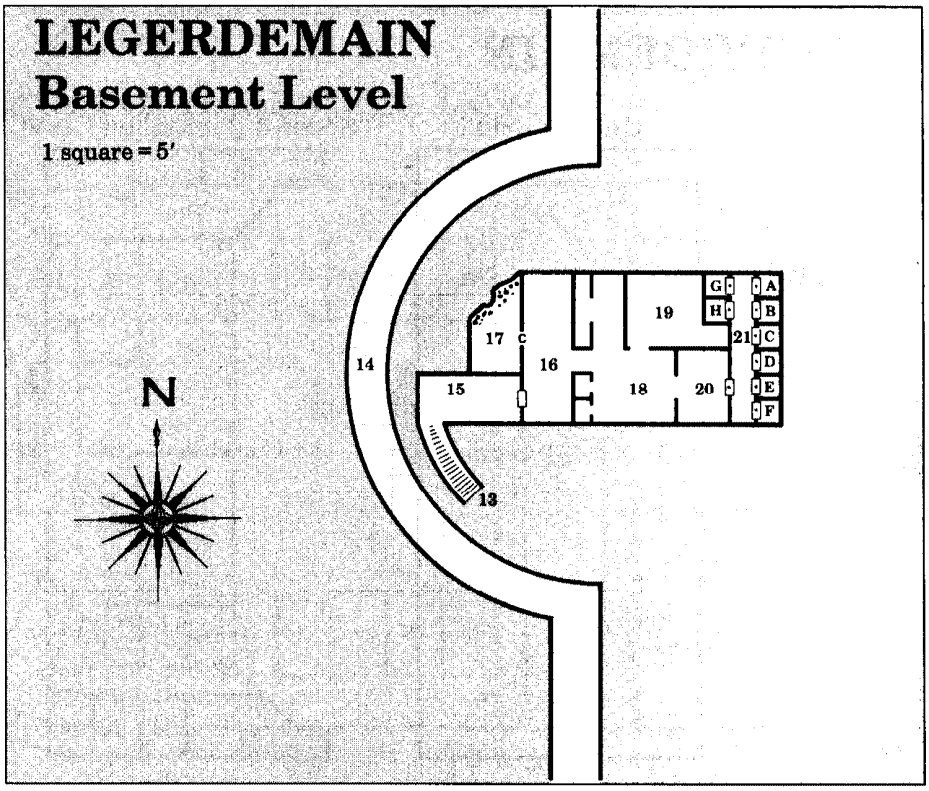
48. Music Storage. This darkened room contains spare instruments, boxes of sheet music, and reams of blank music paper.

49. Storage Hall. The door to this hallway is locked, as are the doors to areas 51 and 52. The door to area 50 is unlocked, and even open partway. It locks automatically if shut.

50. Common Storage. This room contains smaller props: fake weapons, breakaway bottles, plaster rocks and bones, jars of makeup, dummy corpses, wooden cutouts of trees and bushes, and piles of normal items (braziers, chains, chisels, cleavers, crowbars, hatchets, ladders, machetes, mauls, rowing oars, scythes, shovels, stools, torches, lanterns, and so on).

51. Sealed Storage. Stored here are irreplaceable items that will be used in the immediate future: golden field plate armor (gilded with paint); a huge dollhouse; a throne; a spinning wheel; a black lance with a vicious barb at the tip; and several oversized items from the set of a giant's table, including a candle, cup, plate, fork, and half-eaten apple.

52. Greater Storage. This vault holds some of the more expensive items that could not be stored in the basement. These items include a collapsible four-poster bed, a small musical organ, a flesh golem puppet, three incredibly realistic werewolf costumes, and two spell scrolls. The scrolls are in bone



tubes with inscriptions that must be read with *read magic* spells. The first scroll contains the illusionist spell *phantasmal force.* The second scroll contains the spells *detect invisible, invisibility, magic mouth* (×2), *improved invisibility,* and *audible glamer.*

Storage Roof and Fifth Backstage Floor

53. Grid Work Area. This is the gridhoppers' home base, where sets can be stashed during the run of a play. Also stored up here are more spools of rope and cord. This area and area 54 can be reached only via the grid.

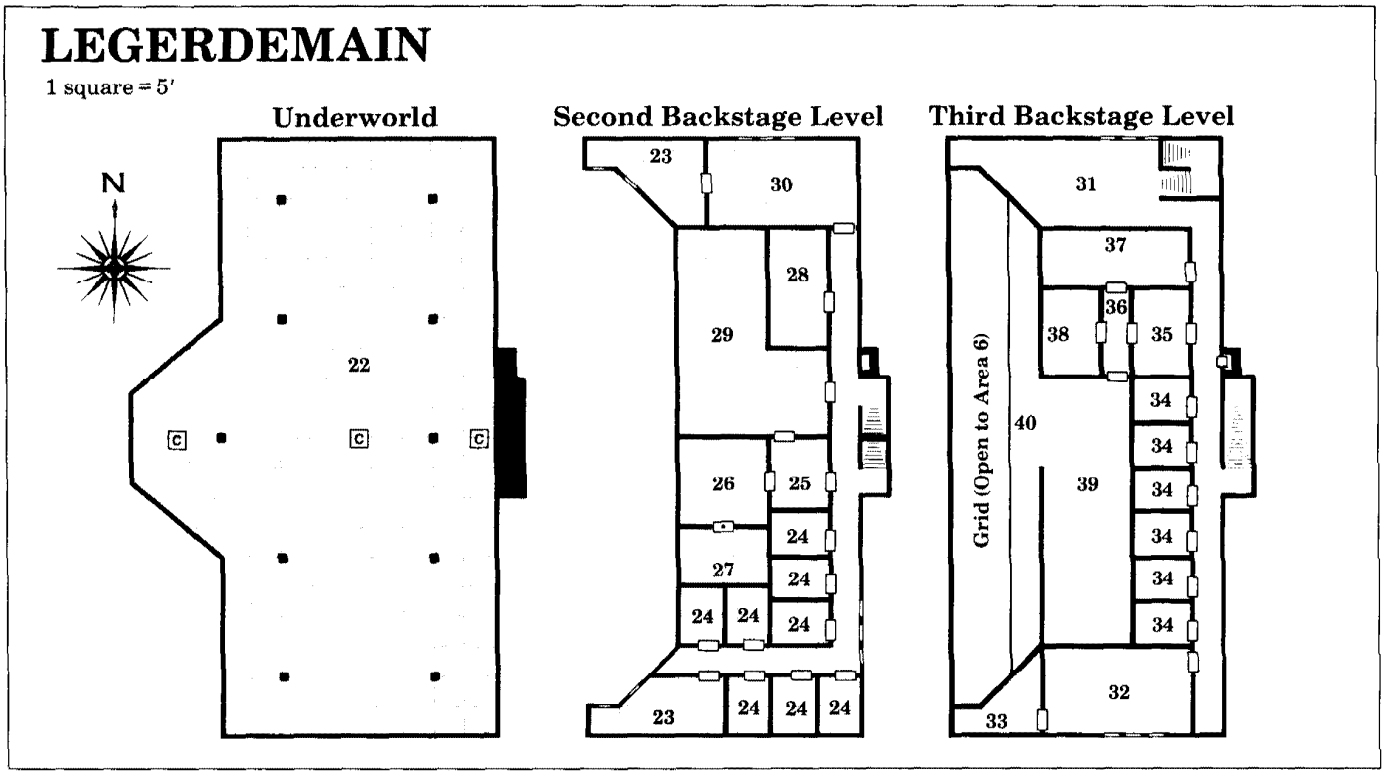
54. Attic Storage. This is the largest storage area in the theater. Whole sets are placed here when no longer needed. Many are three-dimensional backdrops of city scenes, the insides and outsides of buildings, towers, stables, inns, abbeys, and castles. Set up in the north wing is an entire town square with a well in its center, scaled down about 50%. This great hall also contains accessories to these sets: staircases, fireplaces, balconies, bridges, railings, fences, etc. Other large items stored here include a huge puppet treant (requiring six people to control) and a giant spider machine. The greatest, however, is a full-sized dragon, operated from within by a team of puppeteers. Its arms, head, and wings are moved by levers. A megaphone in its head produces a loud roar. This monster was suspended from the grid by ropes and flew convincingly over the stage in last season's hit production.

Operable (but not real) siege engines are stored in the south hall (see "Adversaries" for details). These include ballistas, light and heavy catapults, rams, and trebuchets.

Legwork

From their exploration and queries, the PCs should be able to gather the following information:

1. The play itself is an epic fantasy filled with gruesome beasts, mystical swords, valiant warriors, and fair maidens. Left alone, the plot is a fine tale of true love defying all odds to overcome adversity, but Prym is not leaving it alone. No one but the director himself knows why he is changing certain scenes in the script. The consensus is



that Prym is a genius at stage production, so who is to argue with his alterations? The changes are minuscule, except for the climax, which remains to be fully detailed by the director.

2. Thespor Myrmesstan, possibly the greatest actor of present times, has apparently gone insane. He remains flawless in his performances but is otherwise moody and speaks gibberish that seems to cover hidden meanings. Most of the other actors now avoid him, especially Tivity, who claims that the great actor has been eyeing her much too intently of late.

3. It is rumored that Tivity is madly in love (or at least intensely infatuated) with Thespor. In fact, she did reveal her feelings to Thespor not long ago, when the actor was still in his right mind. No one knows how Thespor received this revelation, but it was not long after that his sanity fled him. Naturally, this has upset Tivity greatly, but instead of expressing her troubles through sorrow or despair, the actress has become exceptionally cranky.

4. Small, unexplained accidents have been common in the theater in the past few days. Tools are missing, paint cans tip over on expensive costumes, small fires start up mysteriously, and the missing tools turn up in the most inopportune places. Some of the more superstitious employees claim that an evil spirit is the cause.

5. The night of the first performance is also the night of the legendary Moon of the Twixt, when, according to the common tale, the borders between this realm and another dimension—populated with nightmarish bogies and daemons—weaken and rupture. On top of the rumors of evil spirits (see above), this coincidence of timing adds an atmosphere of paranoia and superstition to the theater. Who knows what ills are in store for the performance on opening night? (Truthfully, this tale has no actual bearing on the story, but only serves to intensify the mystery and provide a few false leads.)

At no time during their explorations will the party succeed in questioning Prym Glammer. Whenever they attempt a confrontation with the director, he quickly gives them an "important" assignment, such as running out to the nearest shop to buy some much needed black thread. PCs searching Prym's office (area 38) will not find any incriminating evidence.

Hanging by a Thread

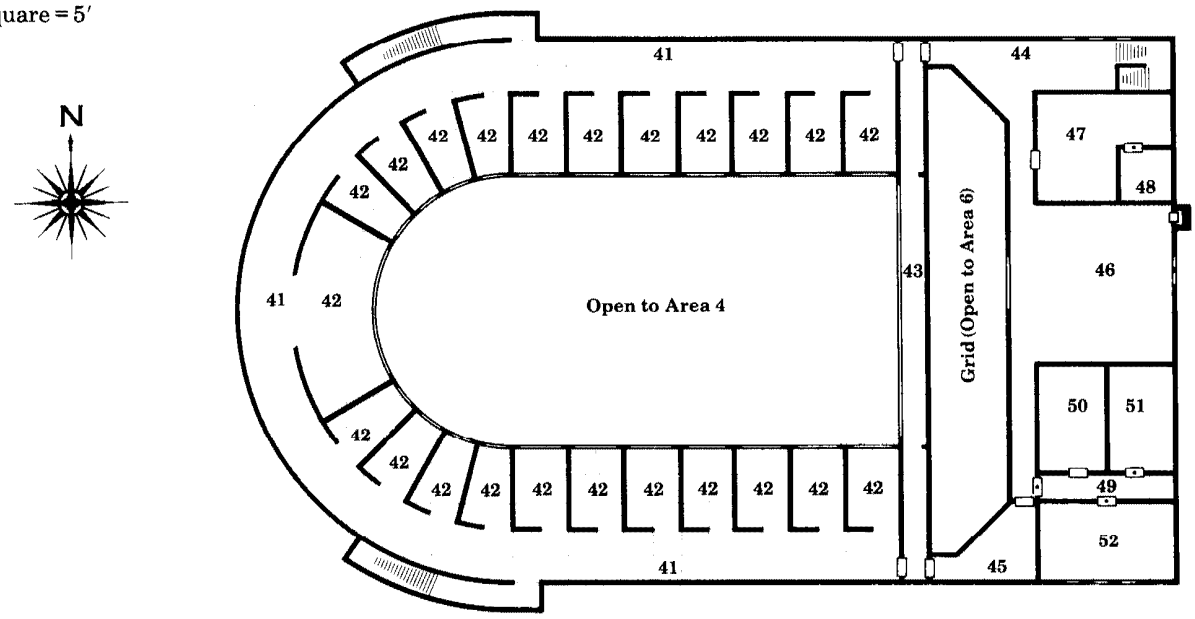
During the afternoon of the PCs' first day of employment at Legerdemain, an accident occurs in the grid area. The DM may slip this in at any available opportunity, but it can be especially useful during a lull in the role-playing. The PCs hear cries of alarm that may cause them to rush to the stage area.

When the PCs arrive, they find one gridhopper hanging by his roped ankle above the stage. None of the other gridhoppers are able to go to his aid, as they are busy trying to stabilize a huge tower—part of the play's set—that hangs at the top of the grid and is about to crash onto the stage.

The party may do what they can to help. The hapless gridhopper hangs about 15' above the stage toward the northern end. The giant prop hangs over the northern edge of area 53. The other gridhoppers will re-rope and secure the tower in five rounds.

If the PCs help to save the worker, the prop, or both, the hoppers are extremely grateful. They explain that a gremlin-

LEGERDEMAIN
Balcony Level and Fourth Backstage Level



like creature caused the accident by fooling with the ropes that supported the heavy tower. Though most of the NPCs dismiss this as nonsense, the PCs may suspect Torl the gnome unless he was with them at the time of the accident. Other people can provide an alibi for the gnome, but the party may waste time interrogating him. (He didn't do it; the real culprit will be revealed shortly.)

Prym's Dilemma

For the rest of the day, the party may continue to explore the theater or converse with the workers. At 6:00 P.M., Prym Glammer excuses everyone and retreats to his office (area 38). He waits there until everybody leaves, including the guards, then comes down and locks all the doors (Prym has his own set of keys). By hiding themselves, the PCs may remain in the theater to keep careful watch on Glammer. They will be disappointed if they wait for him outside, for he does not come out, but it should be possible for clever PCs to break into the theater when they grow impatient. This may be one of the few opportunities to confront Prym before the performance tomorrow, so the DM should subtly encourage the PCs to continue their investigation this evening.

With the party skulking about the theater at night, a confrontation with Prym is inevitable. This encounter can occur at any particular time or place the DM likes. As soon as the director notices intruders in the theater, he panics and attacks with his *wand of illusion*. Read or paraphrase the following to the players when Prym wields the wand's power:

> A hole in the air before you rips open and widens with every passing second. Beyond the hole can be seen only an unending field of indigo, except for the lone creature stepping forth from the gaping gate. The beast is an amorphous mass with dozens of eyestalks and tentacles ending in snarling, fanged maws that scream hideously as the creature approaches.

With his wand, Prym has created this illusion using *phantasmal force* and *audible glamer*. Most players will realize that this is only a vision of fancy, but their characters must still successfully disbelieve the illusion (see pages 82-84 of the *Player's Handbook* for rules on adjudicating illusions). To those who believe the illusion, the monster attacks as a 10-HD beast and inflicts 1-12 hp bite damage. The screech it produces is so nerve shattering that it makes casting spells with verbal components very difficult (save vs. spells to successfully cast).

Prym continues this attack for three rounds, at which time he recognizes the PCs as employees of the theater. He will break off the attack earlier if he is attacked himself. The PCs should try to avoid harming the director, but if they threaten violence, Prym surrenders pitiably and offers them whatever money he has in his purse (16 gp, 32 sp).

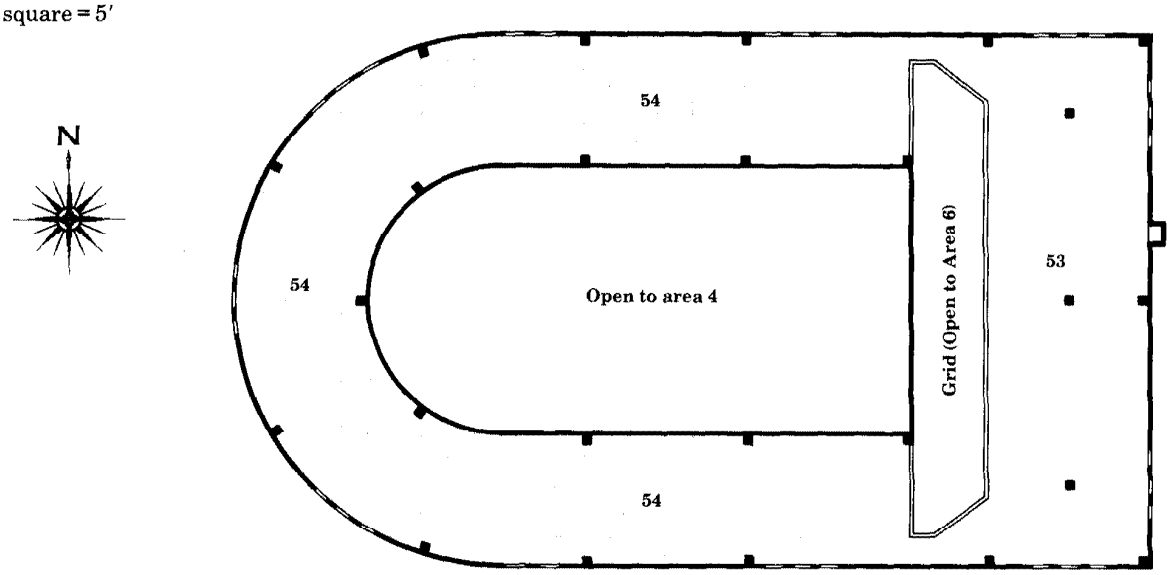
If the PCs back off, however, Prym apologizes for his attack but demands to know their business in the theater after working hours. If the PCs mention Kurin Earntor's suspicions about an assassination attempt on Skylltor Rhune, Prym denies it vehemently.

"*I* am not the one who plots murder! It is Rhune himself! That damn wizard is planning an assassination of his own for tomorrow's production.

"But I would not grieve if harm befell

LEGERDEMAIN
Storage Roof and Fifth Backstage Level

1 square = 5'



Rhune. He stole my talisman from me! You must understand, I suffer from hideous unrelenting nightmares—you caught a taste of them just now from my illusion—and my only reprieve from them is my talisman. My nights have been so incredibly hellish of late that I would do anything to get my talisman back.

"As ransom for my talisman, I have regretfully given Rhune access to Legerdemain. I complied with his demands, changed the play's script to make the assassination easier, but I truly do not know the object of his plot. He would not trust me with that information."

In the interest of saving his own name, Prym will also reveal that tonight he is to meet a group of "goons" hired by Rhune, in the attic of Legerdemain. For good behavior thus far, Rhune is rewarding Prym by allowing him to spend this night with his talisman and get a healthy night's rest before the play's opening night (under guard, of course). Prym expects to regain his talisman permanently after the assassination is accomplished.

The director is willing to go against Skylltor's plans if the party will aid him in retrieving his talisman. Unknown to both Prym and the PCs, however, an invisible imp named Iaeval is watching the entire meeting between the PCs and the director. The creature is the familiar of one of the goons (detailed later), and has been assigned the task of observing Prym. Thus, the goons know immediately of Prym's treachery and the party's involvement. Even as the PCs speak to the director, the villains enter the theater's attic by way of the chimney (area 46) and quickly set up an ambush for the party.

The Goon Squad

Even an evil wizard can't do all the dirty work himself, so Skylltor has hired a group of assorted thugs to help pick up the slack. This group of motley villains is detailed here.

Iaeval, imp: INT average; AL LE; AC 2; MV 6, fly 18 (A); HD 2+2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 plus poison; SA become *invisible* at will, *polymorph, suggestion;* SD *detect good;* save as 7-HD creature; immune to cold, fire, electricity; regenerate 1 hp per round; harmed only by silver or magical weapons; +1 to all saving throws (*luckstone*); MR 25%; SZ T; ML 9; XP 650; MC1.

Guan-yu (see below) is Iaeval's master, and for now it does exactly as she commands, for it suspects she will someday garner great power. Iaeval benefits from the powers of a *luckstone* it swallowed many months ago. Iaeval has been causing the rash of accidents in the theater over the past few days. It had grown bored just watching over Prym all the time, and nothing in this or any other world is more deadly than a bored imp.

Guan-yu, female hobgoblin: INT average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; C4/W4; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD regenerates 1 hp per round as familiar; SZ M; ML 12; XP 270; MC1.

Spells: *cure light wounds, darkness, protection from good; chant, silence 15' radius; charm person, magic missile, spider climb; levitate, scare.*

Guan-yu was born in an alien Oriental land but prefers to live in this one, where her talents as a witchdoctor can always find a ready market. She is dressed in a long purple gown decorated with yellow dragons and red flowers, and armed with a curved long sword. She summoned her familiar, the imp Iaeval, about two years ago.

Her gown is actually an improved *robe of useful items* with the following devices: dagger, lantern, large mirror, two 10′ poles, 50′ coil of rope, large sack, walking stick, fishing trident, machete, live tarantula, small vial of acid, jeweler's glass, five ounces of *sovereign glue,* five applications of *oil of slipperiness,* hourglass, three wooden barrels (full of water, sand, and tar), bedroll, splitting maul, horses's saddle, black silk pajamas, anvil, apple tree (15′ tall, fruit intact), and a canteen of wine.

Thornellwon Synne, elf: AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; C5; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 15, D 10, C 11, I 13, W 17, Ch 13; ML 14; XP 420; banded mail, bastard sword.

Spells: *cause fear, cause light wounds* (×2), *command, darkness; dust devil, flame blade, heat metal, hold person* (×2); *cause blindness, dispel magic.*

Thornellwon Synne is an incredible exception to the norm of elvenkind; he is both lawful and evil. He worships a devil-god of frost and hate, whose sect allows its priests the use of edged weapons. Thornellwon Synne loves politics, being both diplomatic and even tempered, but also having those darker elements of avarice and unscrupulousness. He is the self-elected field leader of this group, and is accompanied by a trained hawk.

Hawk: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV fly 33 (B); HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1; SA poison, +2 bonus to attack roll and double talon damage from dive, attack to blind with beak; SD never surprised; SZ S; ML 9; XP 175; MC2.

The claws of the hawk are coated with a special poison that (if the saving throw is missed) instills a terrible dizziness that hinders all actions. This vertigo makes spell-casting and combat impossible. The victim's armor class suffers a penalty of −2, saving throws are made at −4, and Dexterity and shield bonuses are negated. This effect lasts 1d6+4 rounds. Each claw's poison is good for two uses.

Rood, mongrelman: INT low; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type; SD camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC2.

Rood is a flat-headed, green-scaled being with tufts of red-brown hair and a large maw with mismatched fangs. One eye is catlike and gold; the other is large, white, and pupilless. Both hands are humanlike, but the left has four fingers and the right has six. Rood wears robes and rags to cover most of his awful features. He has a prehensile tail that acts as a third arm and can deliver an extra attack in each round. Skylltor has armed him with two daggers and a *dagger of homing* (as a *dart of homing, Dungeon Master's Guide,* page 183).

The Vynticator, half-elf: AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; T5; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (×3); S 13, D 18, C 12, I 17, W 10, Ch 16; PP 50%, OL 35%, FT 30%, MS 75%, HS 60%, HN 35%, CW 85%, RL 15%; ML 17; XP 975.

The Vynticator wields two weapons simultaneously, a short sword and a dagger. She also has a bow and 10 arrows strapped to her back, a garrote in her hair, a sap in her boot, and three throwing knives sewn into her cloak.

The Vynticator is one of the cleverest assassins alive, but scant resources have forced her to become one of Skylltor's goons, at least temporarily. This woman is afflicted with a very curious neurosis. She feels comfortable only in high-pressure situations. If inactive for any length of time, she grows bored and impatient and even sporadically violent. In combat, however, she is unnaturally calm, rendering her immune to emotion-related charms and enchantments such as *fear, taunt, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, Leomund's lamentable belabourment,* and so on.

Phant and **Traith,** twin halflings: AL CN; AC 6 or 5 (tumbling); MV 6; T6; hp 24 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (×3), juggling; SD tumbling evasion; S 13, D 18, C 12, I 10, W 11, Ch 14; PP 65%, OL 50%, FT 45%, MS 70%, HS 65%, HN 40%, CW 85%, RL 15%; ML 14; XP 975 each.

Phant has four knives, a dagger, two torches, and a tinderbox. Traith's possessions include a short sword, dagger, and a tiger-eye gem (10 gp) that she keeps as a token of good luck. Traith's sword is envenomed, good for 1-2 uses. Anyone struck must successfully save or become totally exhausted (lose 50% of current hit points, move at half normal speed per *slow* spell for 1d4+5 rounds).

This pair of foul-mouthed, bad-tempered halflings are the perfect brother-sister burglar team. Their statistics are identical. Skylltor has bribed them with a great number of gems to join his group of evil-doers.

Lulyuerg Gathwright: AL LE; AC 1; MV 12; F4; hp 38; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/45, D 17, C 15, I 9, W 10, Ch 11; ML 13; XP 420.

This goon is as sour and taciturn as the most stone-hearted of dwarves. He wears *banded mail +1* and carries a *battle axe +2,* a weapon he is specialized in (+1 to hit, +2 to damage, #AT 3/2).

Unless the PCs are not searching the theater, the goons will wait for the party to come to them. The party will find the goons in the southwest corner of area 54, ready to direct an attack to the east or the north. Since Iaeval was watching the meeting between the PCs and Prym, the bad guys will not be surprised. The villains don't attack to annihilate the party, but rather to drive them away or, if the opportunity presents itself, to capture them.

Some of the goons will use the prop siege devices stored here as weapons. Although the devices really do operate, all of their functions are fractions of the real thing, including range, damage potential, and crew needed for operation. Lulyuerg attacks with a ballista that strikes anyone up to 160 yards away and inflicts 1d8+1 hp damage. Rood and Traith operate a toy heavy catapult, which strikes anyone in the hall as long as they can be seen and are not closer than 30′. The catapult can fire only every other round and inflicts 1-4 hp damage (the ammunition is only plaster). All three villains will team up to charge the party with a ram (+2 to hit, Dmg 1-12) if they close for melee.

Iaeval the imp snaps in and out of view to cause as many problems as possible, biting an ear here and stealing a weapon there. The Vynticator attempts to circle around the attic unnoticed to attack the PCs from behind. Thornellwon Synne and Guan-yu cast appropriate spells to hamper the PCs. Phant is juggling four knives, a dagger, and two lit torches. Every round, he tosses one of these weapons at the best target. The torches inflict 1-6 hp damage.

The goons have a small wooden cage imprisoning a live black cat. If Prym is with the party, he screams that the cat is his "Talisman" as soon as combat commences. Shortly after this, one of the goons (probably Rood) accidentally steps on the cage, crushing one side of it and freeing the cat. In the confusion, the frightened feline immediately runs

off in a random direction. Both Rood and Prym pursue the cat, adding to the mayhem.

The PCs may join in the chase, but Talisman has a movement rate of 15 and the ability to dart into all but the smallest places within the mass of props and stage devices. An individual must get within 5' and then make a successful attack roll against AC 0 to catch the cat barehanded. If a PC does catch the cat, the goons concentrate their attacks on that individual to retrieve it. The DM should keep constant track of all involved in the chase, as they could interfere with combat, and vice versa.

Talisman, domestic cat: INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 1-5 hp; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1; SA claw rake, −5 penalty to enemy's surprise roll; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ T; ML 9; MC11.

The combat ends when either group is captured or driven away. The goons retreat after only a few casualties. Any captured PCs are bound and left in room 17 to be discovered later. The goons break down the plastered door to gain entry, as they are the ones who plastered it up. Skylltor has already stashed one prisoner here (see "Double Trouble" below).

Captured villains can be interrogated but will yield only enough information to confirm what Prym has already told the PCs. The same holds true for any corpse questioned with a *speak with dead* spell.

The excitement is over for this night, and nothing else happens until dawn. The goons leave immediately after the battle to report to Rhune, taking the cat with them if possible. Prym Glammer fears for his life now and asks the PCs (if they have not been captured) to watch over him until tomorrow, especially if he does not have his kitty-cat. He argues that the PCs' obligations to his employer, Kurin Earntor, carry over to him. Skylltor decides, however, to leave the director alone for now. The yet-unseen villain is hatching fresh evil schemes for the morrow.

Opening Day

In the morning, the PCs must make some decisions. Prym asks the party to return with him to Legerdemain and resume their cover jobs. Because of his involvement with Skylltor Rhune, he does not wish to contact the civil authorities (and these authorities will not be inclined to listen to the party without testimony from Prym). Kurin Earntor is not at home if the PCs attempt to visit him. A butler explains that Earntor is breakfasting with a business associate. The party is on its own.

For the adventure to resume, the PCs must decide to return to their investigation at Legerdemain. Prym plays upon their sense of justice if the PCs seem reluctant. With or without his cat, Talisman, Prym is afraid Skylltor may attempt some form of violence on his person. And the assassination still demands consideration. If the PCs agree to return to Legerdemain, Prym asks them to perform some odd jobs about the theater while keeping an eye out for Skylltor and his goons.

The working frenzy within Legerdemain is doubled in intensity this day, if that is possible. The party will find it difficult to even think clearly amidst the confusion, and most of the NPCs who were cooperative yesterday are just too busy to discuss anything with the party today.

The PCs may proceed with their investigation in any way they please. They may set themselves up in defensive positions about the theater in a stakeout for the villains, play bodyguard for Prym, or simply perform their chores and wait for the bad guys to make the first move.

Whatever they do, any PCs who remain in area 9 will witness an encounter between Kurin Earntor, Skylltor Rhune, and Prym Glammer. If no members of the party stay backstage, an NPC spreads the news that Kurin is making an impromptu inspection.

> You spot Kurin Earntor strolling about the backstage area, inspecting props and observing rehearsals while chatting with the gentleman who accompanies him. This other man is tall and lean, towering over Kurin, and is dressed in sky blue robes decorated with white birds in flight. His long yellow hair is tied back in a braid. Despite his fair appearance, an intangible quality about the man makes you feel nervous. In fact, his silver-gray eyes send shivers up your spine as their attention falls on you for a moment.

This scary person is Skylltor Rhune, as the PCs can learn from any theater employee.

Skylltor Rhune: AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; W14; hp 40; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 14, D 12, C 10, I 17, W 9, Ch 17; ML 16; XP 6,000; *bracers of defense AC4, wand of force.*

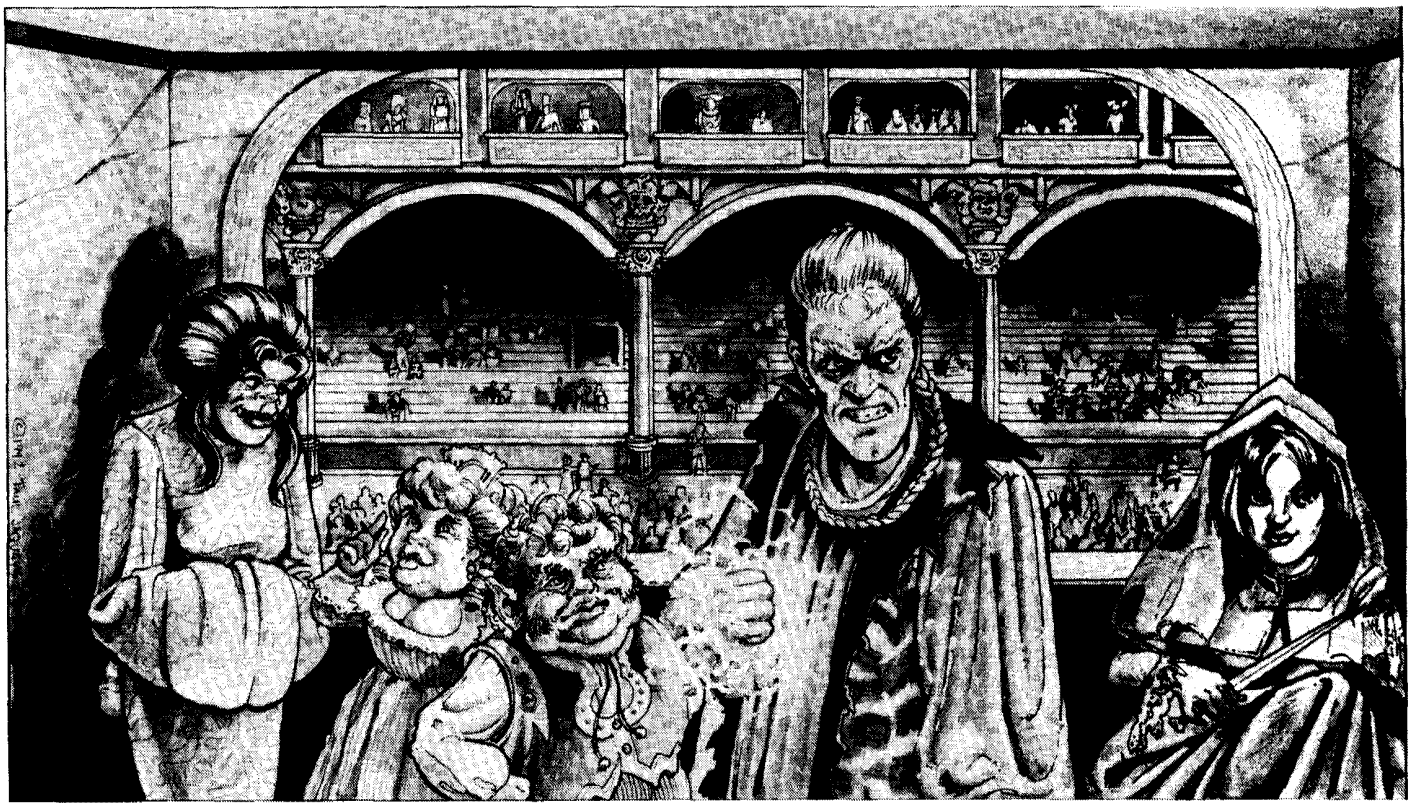
Spells: *armor, enlarge, jump, shield, shocking grasp; invisibility, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, rope trick, strength; fly, gust of wind, haste, protection from normal missiles, slow; fire shield, fumble, minor globe of invulnerability, stoneskin; chaos, domination, feeblemind, telekinesis; Bigby's forceful hand, monster summoning IV; power word stun.*

Skylltor's twisted personality, bent morals, and errant ethics allow him none of the respect for human kindness and equality that inhibits other mages. When Skylltor sets his mind to a goal, such as his present scheme, he is overcome with an obsession that threatens the borders of sanity. Skylltor prefers close physical combat but uses his spells to turn the outcome of any scuffle.

Skylltor Rhune has decided to give Prym Glammer a subtle warning not to interfere with his assassination plot. The wizard, who is one of the theater's largest contributors, requested an inspection of the final rehearsal to "make sure that the production does not contain anything substandard or offensive." Kurin is not pleased with allowing Skylltor backstage, especially when he believes Prym wishes to kill the wizard, but Skylltor hinted at larger donations to Legerdemain in order to make Kurin comply with his request.

The two gentleman walk about the backstage area until they meet up with Prym Glammer. The PCs may sneak up to the group in order to eavesdrop on their conversation.

> The friction between Prym Glammer and Skylltor Rhune is immediately obvious. The director's eyes sparkle with hatred at the sight of Skylltor, but he manages to keep his face from being enveloped by an ugly scowl of discontent. The wizard's face is marred by a slight smirk, as if he were amused by this encounter.
>
> Kurin Earntor, nervous that a raucous scene may erupt, attempts a pleasant conversation. "Ah, yes, Prym Glammer. I have delightful news. Lord Rhune plans to increase his donations to our theater. Your next production may be the grandest one yet!"



Skylltor raises his finger to interrupt. "But only if this play turns out for the best. You should take care not to make any drastic changes this late that might ruin your play." The wizard leans forward, using his height to intimidate Prym. "Remember, I'll be in the balcony, watching. Watching very intently."

With that, Kurin and Skylltor leave the building, Prym goes back to work, and the PCs may be at a loss as to what to do. Confronting Skylltor Rhune would be a mistake. If Kurin sees the PCs approaching, he subtly signals them to stay away and not cause trouble. If any PCs are headstrong enough to attempt to talk to Skylltor, Kurin brusquely dismisses them and exits the building with the wizard. Remember that the PCs are posing as menials at the theater and have no legitimate reason to talk to Kurin and his friend.

Kurin does not want the PCs talking to Skylltor because he is afraid that they might tell the wizard about Prym's "assassination plot," and this would assuredly kill future donations from the man. Also, Kurin believes Skylltor to be the victim in this scenario, so he will not be pleased if the PCs accuse the wizard of any wrongdoing. Skylltor himself will act amused by any rude accusations: "You theater types are always 'on stage,' aren't you?" Kurin won't be so cordial, however, summoning the theater guards to escort troublemakers from Legerdemain (and dismissing the PCs from service).

If any adventurers openly attack the wizard, Skylltor defends himself with *power word stun, Bigby's forceful hand,* or *spheres of force* (from his wand). Theater guards (2-8 of them) join the fray in one round and take all apprehended PCs to the city prison.

Some PCs may decide to follow Skylltor and Kurin as they leave. The Vynticator (if she has not been previously eliminated) is following Skylltor from afar as a bodyguard. She ambushes the PCs just after they exit the theater, attacking with six darts envenomed with a powerful sleeping drug (save at −4; effects last 1d4 + 1 turns). If all PCs are incapacitated by the darts, they are taken to area 17 and tied up. If the PCs evade the darts, the Vynticator retreats, but the PCs have lost sight of Skylltor and Kurin in the crowd because of the disturbance. They have little choice but to return to Legerdemain.

Talking with Prym Glammer will prove even less fruitful, as he is too busy to discuss anything as the moment of opening curtain draws near, although he might react if a PC mentions Skylltor's veiled threat. At this, Prym grabs the adventurer's arm, takes him aside, and says, "You don't understand my motives. 'The play's the thing,' as a wise man once said. And right now, this play is the most important thing on my mind. It takes precedence over the schemes of evil wizards or the threat of wicked nightmares. *Nothing* will stand in the way of my making this production the greatest this theater has ever seen. Nothing. Not even you." At that, Prym returns to the business of being a director.

So what do the PCs do now? The DM should allow the PCs to do whatever they feel is important, but interrupt them constantly with little (but annoying) events and encounters, such as:

1. A group of stagehands carrying a large prop bumps into and knocks over

a PC while he isn't looking.

2. Iaeval the imp is still roaming about the theater, causing havoc, and he makes the party the victims of his diabolical attentions. Without warning, the adventurers are assaulted by a barrage of unruly pranks (shoes tied to chairs, caps set on fire, etc.).

3. Tivity walks past and insults a PC for no apparent reason.

Double Trouble

Just when the party is getting exasperated and it is almost time for the play to begin, one of the PCs overhears two stagehands conversing. One stagehand is calming the other, who appears to have suffered a great fright.

> "It's the Moon of the Twixt, I tell you," says the scared stagehand. "Already, ghastly beasts are invading the theater. I heard one of them calling out in the basement. Had I not fled, it would have drained my soul!"

The poor man raves on while his friend assures him that it is just a drafty basement and his imagination at work.

Having the curiosity of adventurers, the party should investigate the basement. Underground, they too hear an eerie voice calling out as if from beyond the barrier that separates the Prime Material plane from other bizarre and malevolent dimensions. As it turns out, though, it's the frantic cries of someone trapped in area 17. Someone broke down the plastered door to this room, tossed in a prisoner, and then boarded it back up.

The party is in for a surprise when they break into the room. There, sitting in the mud, his hands bound, and looking a bit frayed and disheveled, is the play's leading man, Thespor Myrmesstan! The PCs will realize how shocking this is when they recall seeing Thespor only moments ago, in full costume, rehearsing on the stage. "Thank the starry heavens!" Thespor cries when he is released, then brushes past the party. If the PCs let him go, he runs upstairs, but if halted for an explanation, the ragged man cries, "No time! The being upstairs is an imposter and must be stopped!"

Thespor will not go into any more depth than that until he gets upstairs. The party may note the man is clothed only in a torn tunic and trousers and that he seems quite a bit more coherent and rational than the Thespor whom the PCs saw upstairs.

Thespor and the adventurers rush upstairs to find people crowding into the audience area. Opening curtain is only moments away! They will have to push their way through these areas to the backstage chamber (area 9), where a second Thespor Myrmesstan awaits his cue to take the stage.

The cast and crew gasp and cry out in amazement when the two men are seen together. They are exact duplicates of one another, except for styles of dress. While one wears ragged garments that smell of three weeks' constant use, the other is decked out in his resplendent costume, the armor of a valiant cavalier. The two men lock gazes for a moment. The ragged one's eyes betray a livid anger. The costumed one's eyes are glazed over as if staring into a personal dream-world.

Stagehands, actors, and guards crowd around the two men, trying to determine which is the real Thespor Myrmesstan.

Though shocked by the sight of the great actor doubled, the theater employees quickly devise a plan of asking intimate questions to discern which is the real actor (the DM should wait a few moments to see if the players think of doing this first). The costumed Thespor ignores the interrogation, completely oblivious to the goings-on around him. In contrast, the ragged Myrmesstan answers any and all questions quickly and correctly. Any PC who casts a *detect magic* spell will instantly know that the costumed Thespor is a magical creation, not a real human being at all.

But none of this evidence has any effect on Prym Glammer, whose only interest is the theater's production. He pushes his way through the crowd and asks each of the Thespors to recite the opening soliloquy of the play. The disheveled Thespor argues that he has not been in a position to even see the script, much less have it memorized. The costumed Thespor, as if on cue, begins acting out the opening scene, executing his lines flawlessly, complete with appropriate hand gestures and facial expressions.

Prym calls for the theater guards to take away the ragged Thespor, claiming he is the imposter. Prym doesn't really care which actor is real; he just wants his play to proceed without a hitch. He ignores the complaints of the ragged Thespor Myrmesstan as the poor actor is carried away. Likewise, he will not listen to any NPCs and PCs sympathetic to Thespor.

The Curtain Goes Up

At that moment, the play begins and the fake Thespor is ushered onstage. (This imposter is actually a simulacrum with identical statistics as Thespor, except for 6 hp; see "Supporting Cast"). Thus, the imposter is whisked out of the PC's grasp. Prym doesn't want anything to go wrong now, so he posts guards at the stage entrances to prevent the party from nabbing the false Thespor.

However, it should not be difficult for an enterprising party to follow the real Thespor and his escort (four guards) to save him from being imprisoned. The guards defend their prisoner from an outright assault for only a few rounds before retreating to summon help.

Once the real Thespor has been rescued, he begs the party to return to Legerdemain in order to "stop the evil imposter from carrying out its wicked purpose!" If the PCs want to know just what this wicked purpose is, Thespor admits, "Well, I'm not quite sure, really."

So here's the scene: Our party of adventurers and a dirty Thespor Myrmesstan stand in the middle of the city street while the actor attempts an explanation of why his duplicate must be apprehended. "You see, I was kidnapped by an unruly wizard named Skylltor Rhune. He used his magicks to create a simulacrum of my body, and even though it doesn't really behave like I would, it is a perfect match for my physical self. Earlier today, a group Skylltor's goons brought me to Legerdemain and locked me up in the cellar. I overheard one of the goons mention that I was to be blamed for a hideous deed performed by my duplicate. The nature of the deed is unknown to me, but the duplicate must be stopped before the deed is performed, if only to save my good name!"

With this knowledge, the PCs should race back to Legerdemain, but the DM should make getting back to the theater rough business, in the interest of building tension. Bands of city watchmen force the party to take detours, and crowds of people slow them down. Just when the players are about to threaten the DM with violence, the PCs reach Legerdemain.

But the back door is locked, and no

one is allowed entrance now that the play has started. So the party must either pay admission at the front or use sneaky magic to discreetly gain entrance another way.

It is possible, of course, that the preceding events may not occur so neatly. For example, the entire party may have been captured in previous encounters and left helplessly bound in area 17. If this happens, one of Skylltor's goons brings the real Thespor Myrmesstan to room 17 as the play begins, so that the evil wizard may "eradicate all loose ends" after the play is over. Once there, the real Thespor can explain the situation, giving the PCs incentive to escape their bonds in time to stop the "heinous deed."

If the party did not rescue Thespor (either from room 17 or the theater guards), Thespor may escape on his own and attempt to stop the simulacrum himself. Or the DM may let the PCs watch the play and look for anything suspicious. If the adventure has brought about other circumstances, the DM will just have to rely on his best talents to bring the party back on track.

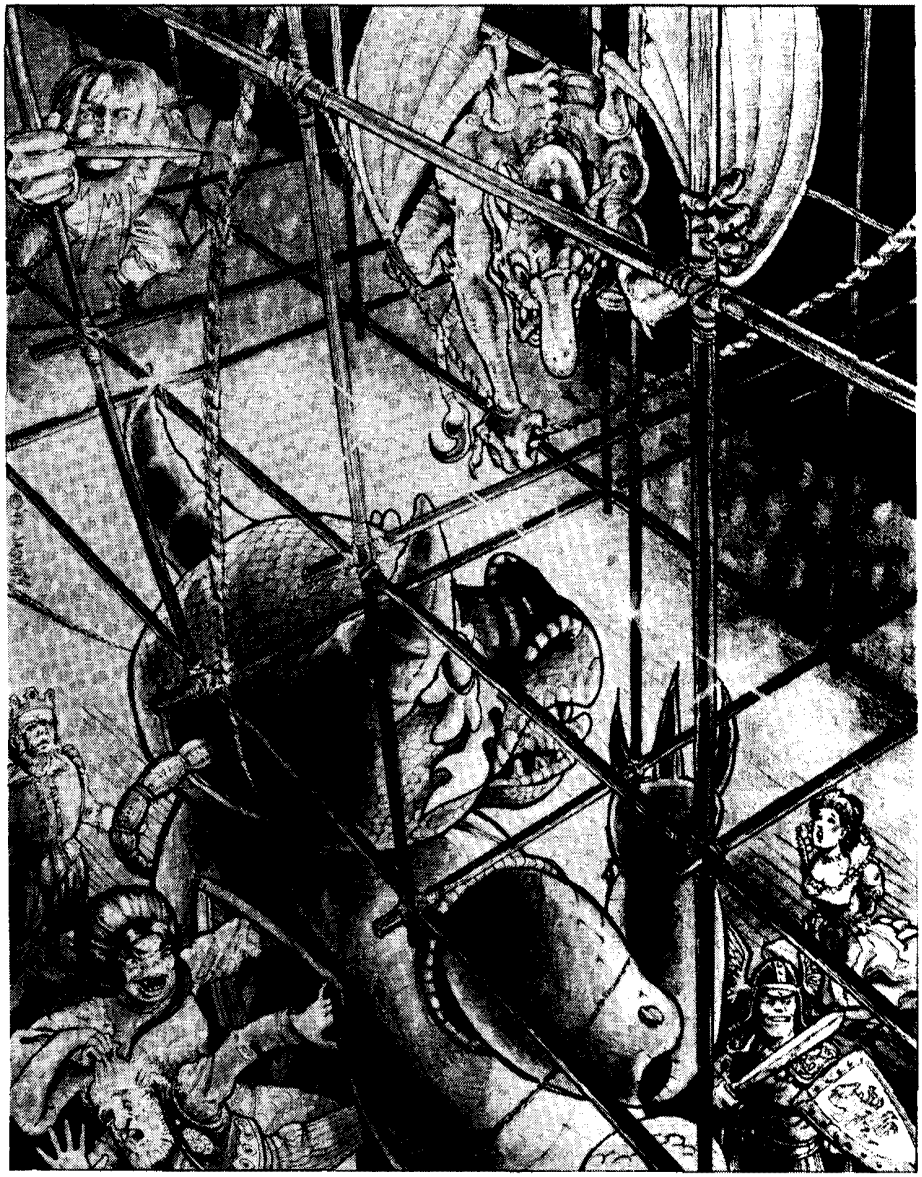
The Final Scene

When the party returns to Legerdemain, a confrontation with Skylltor's goons is inevitable. If the PCs paid admission, they have access to either area 3 or area 4 but not the balcony level, which is where Skylltor and his merry bunch of hellraisers are sitting (area 42, in the center box on the north side of the theater). Skylltor is engrossed in the play, but his goons are keeping a close watch out for trouble and they won't be pleased to see the PCs.

(Here, the DM may reintroduce any goons who were slain in previous encounters, now alive due to *reincarnation* by Skylltor. It may be interesting for the party to battle old foes in a new form.)

Even if the party entered the theater secretly, the goons will notice them eventually. The PCs might attempt to sneak up on Skylltor and be spotted, or Iaeval the imp may find them while scoping out the theater for trouble. The important thing is that the goons and PCs clash yet again. Skylltor remains in his box, however, too interested in the play to join the battle.

This combat should be more open ended than usual. Instead of toe-to-toe swordplay, encourage both groups to run about the theater and attempt unusual maneuvers: using backstage props to harm or hinder opponents, jumping from the balcony level to a nearby chandelier to escape a fatal attack, using costumes to deceive or bewilder the opponents, etc. Chase scenes allow the PCs and goons to run wild through the theater, including the common seats, orchestra balcony, and the backstage hallways, all while the play progresses (the DM should try to keep the action away from the stage, at least for now). Naturally, this sort of silliness will attract theater guards, but that should only add to the mayhem.



The DM should improvise this whole affair on the spot, so it retains a chaotic feel, but if ideas are lacking:

1. In the basement, the goons ambush the PCs with the spell-simulation devices from area 21C.
2. A captured goon or PC is brought to the underworld (area 22) and imprisoned in a crate.
3. Sacks of ash (from area 33) are thrown at the party to create blinding clouds, and then a powerful goon (Lu-

lyuerg or Guan-yu) bludgeons blinded PCs with a big roll of red carpet (also from area 33).

4. Guan-yu uses the *phantasmal force* scroll from area 52 to create an illusion in room 44 of the many-armed demon suddenly animating to attack.

5. Raiders of the sealed storage (area 51) may use the black lance and gargantuan fork as weapons.

6. Three goons dress up in werewolf costumes (from area 52) to surprise the party.

7. The two groups of adversaries can conduct "siege warfare" using the castle set and replica siege weapons in area 54.

Whatever else happens, the DM should juggle events so that both the goons and the PCs gather together in the grid to finish their battles just as the play draws toward its climactic conclusion. Being in the grid is not essential, but it heightens tension if the final battle is conducted 30' in the air while the play is drawing to a close below. Also, it allows the PCs to see the action unfold onstage, where the simulacrum of Thespor Myrmesstan prepares to commit its "heinous deed."

The Play's the Thing

The scene on the stage is as dramatic as the PCs' struggle: A terrible monster called the Trog has demanded that a valiant knight (played by Thespor's simulacrum) sacrifice a fair damsel (Tivity) for its own grotesque purposes. In the story, the knight approaches the maiden with his prop sword, pauses for a dramatic second, and then turns against the Trog and vanquishes the beast. The script is written so, but the simulacrum wields a real sword and does not plan to use it on the Trog.

The assassination of Tivity is the heinous deed, and the PCs should guess what is going to happen when they see the simulacrum draw out a glinting blade. But if the PCs are too slow, the real Thespor Myrmesstan arrives onstage just in time to save Tivity's life. This should draw the PCs' attention away from the goons and cause them to make an impromptu entrance in the play.

When the PCs enter the scene, Tivity is center stage, bound and kneeling in front of a 10'-tall, six-armed puppet that is the Trog-beast. The Trog is controlled by a puppeteer inside the construction. An oil-throwing device is set in its mouth that allows the Trog to exhale flame from its maw in a cone 15' long and 5' wide at its base. The flame inflicts 2-12 hp damage. The Trog is located just in front of area 8.

Standing between Tivity and the Trog is the simulacrum of Thespor. It appears very regal in shining field plate armor. Though its long sword is very real, the armor is actually made of plates of painted wood that restrict movement greatly and provide the same protection as hide armor. The simulacrum's only goal is to sink the long sword into Tivity's throat, but it will defend itself if anyone attacks it.

Also onstage are an assortment of peasants and other maidens, along with a gremlin sidekick of the Trog's (played by Torlharlanninen the gnome). All the extras flee at the party's entrance, except for one of the pilgrims played by Karth Weylund, who works for Skylltor. His task from the beginning has been to watch over the simulacrum and make sure it did not stray from its purpose. When the PCs rush the stage, Karth attempts to stop them by using prop boulders and trees as weapons (Dmg 1-2 or 1-3).

Skylltor's goons will also ambush the party from above. The Vynticator remains in the grid to rain arrows down on the PCs. Guan-yu crawls into the Trog puppet in order to use the flame device on any PCs unlucky enough to be in its range.

Remember that Skylltor Rhune is still watching. He'll be able to see any ad-lib performance of the PCs onstage, and he won't be happy to see his plans go astray. At the first sign of trouble, he casts *stoneskin, fire shield,* and *haste* spells on himself, then *flies* to the stage to deal with the party. His attacks include *shocking grasp, ray of enfeeblement, power word stun,* and so on (see "Opening Night" for Skylltor's spell list).

But by the time Skylltor arrives onstage, the party has already thwarted his evil plan. Tivity is saved, and only the combat needs to be resolved. Prym Glammer joins the PCs' side of the battle, using his illusionist spells, a few rounds after Skylltor arrives. Shortly thereafter, theater guards storm the stage and break up the fight.

Near the end of the battle, the simulacrum of Thespor Myrmesstan receives a mortal wound, inflicted by a goon if need be. In the battle's aftermath, the magical creation stumbles to the front of the stage, already beginning to revert to its original form: snow and ice. As it murmurs its last lines, its flesh loses color and form as water drips through the armor to pool on the stage. Within moments, the simulacrum collapses in a watery heap.

Author! Author!

Once all of this business is over, the audience, though confused as to what just happened, reacts with real applause. This was one of the most exciting conclusions to a play they've seen in years. Only after the last of the skirmishes are completed do the gridhoppers think to shut the curtain. Immediately, all living bad guys and PCs are apprehended by theater guards and city authorities.

Kurin Earntor rushes onto the scene to get the PCs off the hook and make sure full charges are pressed against the villains. When it is revealed to Kurin that Skylltor plotted Tivity's murder, the theater owner goes berserk and begins to pummel the wizard (revealing to the PCs where Tivity's temper comes from). After Kurin is peeled away from Skylltor, he demands to know what the wizard could possibly have gained by killing his daughter in such circumstances.

"It wasn't obvious?" Skylltor screams. "I wanted Tivity for my own, but she had forsaken me for that damned actor!" He points at Thespor Myrmesstan. "I was going to make him pay for stealing her from me . . . pay by being made the murderer of Tivity herself in front of hundreds of spectators. What kind of alibi could he have possibly come up with? None! He would have suffered for years upon years for the murder of his own true love! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Such is the logic of evil wizards.

At that, Thespor turns to Tivity, his face a soft glow of love, and says, "I-I never knew of your feelings for me, Tivity."

Thespor approaches the young actress to embrace her in his arms. "Forget it!" yells Tivity, as she turns her back abruptly. "You're too dangerous to be around. Besides, I can only be happy with [insert the name of a male PC who has received the most abuse from Tivity in this adventure]."

Tivity walks up to the chosen PC and

rests her head on his shoulder, beaming with adoration. The infuriated Skylltor calls out incoherent threats even as the guards carry him away:

"I'll get you! You can count on that! No prison will hold me! I'll break free and hunt you down like the thieving rat you are! I'll wear your guts for garters. I'll grind your bones to dust, I'll—"

Closing the Curtain

Kurin Earntor has no further need for the party's services and expresses his gratitude by awarding the PCs their gems (and possibly an extra one for saving his daughter). Prym Glammer visits the party and offer them 500 gp in thanks for their help. He also informs them that he is about to undergo magical therapy to discern the cause (and possible cure) of his nightmares and his reliance on his cat Talisman. If the PCs rescued Thespor earlier, he offers them a box seat in Legerdemain for the rest of the season. There's no telling how Tivity will reward them.

Although this adventure is over, the villains may not be through with the PCs. Skylltor is free to do more deviltry in just a few days (he has friends in high places). The DM will have to devise something crafty for the wizard's revenge on a certain PC. The goons may be encountered at a later date, either separately or together, but probably working for a new mastermind criminal.

Finally, the theater itself could become the location for future adventures. If the PCs get to be good friends with Prym Glammer and Kurin Earntor, they could try their hand at theater management, play production, or even acting. In later years, the PCs should keep Legerdemain in mind as they attain those inevitable masses of treasure. They could supplement their adventuring careers by becoming patrons of the arts. Ω